

# Игорь Бунич

## КОРСАРЫ КАЙЗЕРА



Igor Bunich

Corsairs of the Kaiser

## Foreword

Having picked up five or six reliable officers and recruited thugs and runaway galley men as sailors from port taverns, the captains of the "corsair brotherhood" went to sea and, raising the "Jolly Roger" on the mast, declared war on all mankind at their own peril and risk.

The bright and talented imagination of Sabatini, Stevenson, Conan Doyle and many other authors known to us since childhood created a whole gallery of immortal images of corsair captains: bloodthirsty - like Captain Sharkey, and noble - like Captain Blood, cunning - like Captain Morgan, and losers like Captain Flint.

Famous captains look at us from the foggy distance of centuries with a certain condescending pity: the romance of corsair raids is over. The pragmatic and cold 20th century - the century of armor and unprecedentedly powerful weapons, left no room for romantic and daring sea adventures, during which corsairs disemboweled "merchants", burned and robbed coastal cities, famously evaded pursuit and buried countless treasures on unmarked maps of the uninhabited islands that served as their bases.

Fortunately (or unfortunately), this is not entirely true, or, more precisely, not at all. Corsairs acted (and act) throughout the 20th century. Corsairism flourished especially brightly in the two world wars, when German cruiser-raiders entered the open spaces of the ocean.

Germany, as it were, compensated for the lost time when the British, Spaniards, Portuguese and French were engaged in sea robbery. In the 20th century, corsairs were almost exclusively Germans. That's how it happened historically. And although the naval flags of their country fluttered on the masts of the German cruisers, and the crews wore naval uniforms, they, like their distant predecessors, waged a war against all mankind at their own peril and risk. For they did not have any allies or bases in the ocean, and every five or six days they had to replenish their supplies of coal, fuel oil and fresh water. There was nowhere to be repaired - any damage could be the last. Only the remote bays of the godforsaken islands overgrown with coconut palms could serve as a place for them to take a short rest.

From all sides, the raiders were surrounded by a host of enemies, combing the ocean to capture and destroy them.

And yet, in endless and deadly chess combinations, the corsairs managed to outmaneuver their much stronger opponents, inflicting sensitive blows on their maritime trade and prestige.

In terms of adventurous fascination, their bold actions are not inferior to the raids of the corsairs of the old times, with the only difference being that the actions of the "literary" corsairs were generated by the brilliant imagination of the great marine painters, and the actions of the corsairs of the 20th century are described as they actually happened.

Of course, this book does not talk about all the raiders of the First World War. There were many more. We have selected, in our opinion, the most famous of them, whose dashing adventures will surely interest readers.

In connection with the publication of the two-volume "Kaiser's Corsairs" and "The Fuhrer's Pirates", I would like to say a few more words. For almost seventy years, all history in our country has been "frozen", and military history in the first place. The actions of not only our opponents, but also the allies in the two world wars were supposed to be written in a pejorative or condescendingly mocking tone. God forbid that any American, English or French ship, not to mention German or Japanese, someone put the epithet "valiant" or "heroic". This would cause an all-Union scandal

values.

Therefore, a certain category of readers in our country is not yet ready to adequately perceive objective descriptions of events and, faced with shocking facts, behaves in an increased aggressive manner. A certain original from Moscow by the name of Koktsinsky even demanded that a criminal case be initiated against the author for "propaganda of war." But such clinical cases, fortunately, are already rare. The sun of freedom warms even the toughest "thugs".

In conclusion, the author considers it his duty to express his heartfelt gratitude to the members of our small "naval community": Afonin N.N., Vasiliev D.M., Vinogradov S.E., Maslovaty N.G., Titushkin S.I. and Trubitsyn S.B., who provided a number of very valuable materials on the actions of German raiders during the First World War.

I would like to express my special gratitude to my daughter Tatyana, who performed a large number of translations of the original documents of the Kaiser fleet.

Igor Bunich. St. Petersburg, April 1998.

## "WHITE SWAN" OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

### Raiding of the AUXILIARY CRUISER "EMDEN"

The light cruiser "Emden" was laid down on November 1, 1906 at the shipyard of the Naval Forces in Danzig. The ship was built according to the 1905-06 Program for the strengthening of the Kaiser fleet, which was only gaining strength.

Due to the financial problems that arose, the construction of the cruiser went very slowly and the first year and a half of the slipway period was actually not carried out.

Only on May 26, 1908, the Emden was launched from the slipway. The Mayor of Emden, Privy Councilor Dr. Furbringer, acted as the "godfather" who gave the ship a name and broke a bottle of Rhine wine on its stem.

By the summer of 1909, Emden was completed. It was a light cruiser, typical of the then German shipbuilding, with a displacement of 4268 tons, a length of 118.3 meters, armed with ten 105-mm and eight 52-mm guns, as well as two torpedo tubes. A three-cylinder, triple-expansion coal-fired steam engine provided the new cruiser with a speed of 23.5 knots.

On July 10, 1909, the naval flag was raised on the Emden, and the ship sailed

tests under the command of his first commander, Captain 2nd Rank Engels.

On August 11, the tests of the Emden were interrupted, and until September 5, the cruiser took part in the maneuvers of the High Seas Fleet, and then served as an escort of the imperial yacht Hohenzollern.

Having completed the acceptance tests by the end of September, "Emden" began to prepare for the so-called "foreign service" in the waters of already quite numerous German overseas colonies.

April 1, 1910 "Emden" was sent to the German East Asian squadron, based in the Chinese port of Qingdao. The ship was supposed to pass not along the usual route through the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal, but around Cape Horn across the Pacific Ocean.

On April 4, the cruiser received a new commander, Captain 2nd Rank Vollerthun, and on April 12, Emden left Kiel, arriving on May 12 in Montevideo. There, together with the light cruiser Bremen, which served as a stationer in South American waters, from May 17 to May 30, the Emden took part in the raid of Buenos Aires (at the mouth of La Plata) in celebrations to mark the centenary of Argentina's independence.

After passing through the Strait of Magellan, the cruisers separated: the Bremen headed for Peru, and the Emden headed for Valparaiso.

The long journey ahead across the Pacific Ocean required a huge consumption of coal. The cruiser was forced to enter the Chilean naval base of Talcahuano, where he received 1100 tons of coal: 800 tons in the bunker and 300 tons in all suitable premises and on the upper deck.

On June 24, Emden left the harbor, starting a trans-Pacific crossing to check the operation of the machine and the reliability of all ship structures in ocean conditions.

Having made its way through a strong oncoming storm that lasted for six days, the Emden arrived on Easter Island on July 12, 1910.

The cruiser reached the island of Tahiti with almost empty bunkers, passing 4200 nautical miles at a speed of 11-12 knots.

On July 22, having arrived in Apia on the island of Samoa, the Emden joined the German cruiser squadron of Rear Admiral Guler, whose presence was caused by disturbances on the coast among the natives. Having reassured the local population (without the use of military force), the German squadron left Apia on August 10 and headed for Suva (Fiji Islands), and then for the Caroline Islands. There, "Emden" separated from the squadron and sailed to the Mariana archipelago. In mid-October, the cruiser arrived in Qingdao.

From October 27 to November 19, 1910, the Emden served as a stationary at the mouth of the Yangtze, from time to time rising up the river to Hankau. On December 22, the cruiser arrived in Nagasaki, and from there returned to Qingdao, where the sailors hoped to celebrate the New Year.

However, these rosy plans were not destined to come true. An unexpected uprising of the native population of Ponape Island (Caroline Archipelago) led to the fact that the Emden was urgently sent there and approached the island on December 28, waiting inactively for the Nuremberg cruiser that left Hong Kong to replace it.

The uprising on the island of 450 square kilometers could not be suppressed by a single demonstration of the flag. From the "Emden" and several other German ships urgently called to the island, landing units were landed, which managed to restore order on Ponape



February 24 only. In battles and skirmishes with the rebels from the Emden crew, one officer was killed and 5 sailors were wounded.

Only on March 1, 1911, the Emden managed to leave Ponape. After a short stay on the island of Guam, on March 19, 1911, the cruiser arrived in Qingdao, where it stood up for repairs.

In the summer of 1911, during a typhoon, the Emden collided with a Japanese steamer and was so badly damaged that she had to return to the factory in Qingdao for repairs. After sailing with the squadron in the central and southern parts of the Pacific Ocean and scheduled repairs, Emden assisted the Taku destroyer in distress at sea, and then, in early December, again came to the mouth of the Yangtze, guarding European interests together with the ships of other countries in a time of unrest caused by the revolution in China.

From the mouth of the Yangtze, "Emden" had to urgently follow to Chemulpo in order to assist the stranded German steamer "Dyke Rickmers".

At the end of 1911, Captain 2nd Rank Vollerthun surrendered command of the cruiser. Captain 2nd rank Restorf became the new commander of Emden. On April 3, 1912, the Emden visited the site of the death in 1896 of the gunboat Itis, which sank during a storm with the entire crew, and held a memorial ceremony there.

In May 1912, the crew of the cruiser won the Imperial Prize in artillery firing squadron.

Until May 1913, Emden continued to serve as a stationer at the mouth of the Yangtze River. In May, another change of commanders took place on the cruiser. Captain 3rd rank Karl Muller took command of the Emden. In mid-June 1913, the cruiser set out on a campaign in the South China Sea, from where it arrived in Nanjing on August 12, starting a stationary service there.

Fighting raged between the government and revolutionary Chinese units in the Nanjing area. Both sides were rather dismissive of the German flag. On August 26, the Emden came under fire from the shore by the rebels. The return fire from the cruiser quickly silenced them. There were no hits on the cruiser.

Later, the Emden moved to Shanghai, where on September 14 it also came under fire from the coast, and again, as in Nanjing, the gunfire of the cruiser cooled hot heads.

After a long stay in the South Chinese waters, the Emden returned to Qingdao in May 1914 ...

...Captain 2nd Rank Karl Muller admired the beautiful view from the bridge of the light cruiser "Emden" to the bay and the city of Qingdao, trying to suppress a feeling of disappointment about the last orders of the squadron commander, Admiral Count Spee. It was a beautiful sunny May morning in 1914. The city of Qingdao - a green oasis in the dusty and boring province of Shantung in northeast China - has probably never looked so beautiful and carefree as at this moment. Beautiful beaches, white European-style houses, emerald waters of the bay, a well-equipped port and a naval base - all this already little resembled that abandoned and impoverished village of Chinese fishermen, which German sailors found here on November 13, 1897, when they first came here in response to the murder of two missionaries. Now, on the shores of the vast bay of Kio Chao, there is a modern trading port, a major center of international trade and tourism. It was hard to believe that all this was done in less than 15 years. The construction of the Shantung railway made it possible to start production at full capacity at abandoned coal mines, copper mines and quartz quarries. During the economic upswing, hospitals and schools (even one institute), majestic government buildings, surrounded on all sides, grew out of bamboo and kaoliang huts of Chinese fishermen.

villas of government officials and entrepreneurs, which have already transformed the entire coast and the nearby hills. The central Friedrich-Straße already differed little from any central street of a large German city. The street led to the Qingdao bridge, where boats and boats moored from military and merchant ships that were in the bay.

"Emden" returned to the base only the day before, having completed the trip to the southern part of China and Japan.

Karl Muller took command of the cruiser a year ago, in the spring of 1913, while still a captain of the 3rd rank, taking it as a gift for his fortieth birthday.

Despite his relative youth, he already had 22 years of service in the Imperial Navy, including a three-year stay at the Naval Ministry in Berlin as an expert in torpedo weapons. Arriving in Qingdao on this May day in 1914, Muller expected to stay there for a short time. It was assumed that his cruiser would be sent across the Pacific Ocean to the shores of Mexico, where another revolution broke out, accompanied by street riots and pogroms.

More than anything else, Karl Muller loved long-distance voyages, and when he became a ship commander, he preferred solo voyages of his cruiser than being in a squadron, and even under the command of such a dry pedant as Admiral Count Schlee. But disappointment awaited him. Instead of Emden, it was decided to send the light cruiser Nuremberg to the shores of America only because she, while in Japan, i.e. a few hundred miles from Qingdao, at the Pacific crossing, would burn a couple of hundred tons less coal than the Emden, coming from Qingdao.

The price of coal jumped, and the squadron immediately declared 1914 "the year of saving coal and oil." Military service, in essence, consists of nothing but disappointments, whether you are an admiral or a simple sailor. Always own plans and desires are crossed out by completely opposite plans of the authorities. So Muller quickly overcame a feeling of disappointment in himself, all the more he was told that he would not replace the Nuremberg, but the light cruiser Leipzig. However, Muller and in Qingdao had something to do. In early June, a large number of sailors who had served their time were to be demobilized and sent home, which did not please Muller at all, since the cruiser was left without experienced old-time specialists. In addition, landing exercises were to be carried out with the support of naval artillery. Such exercises usually ended with a merry dinner on the shore and a parade march through the streets of Qingdao in the direction of the port and the boats waiting there.

On May 23, 1914, Admiral Spee brought the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Emden cruisers remaining at his disposal into a single detachment and brought them to squadron exercises in Qingdao Bay. Fortunately, the exercises lasted only one day, since on Sunday, May 24, horse races were to take place, in which many officers of the squadron and representatives of local high society were to take part as jockeys.

On Sunday, squadron sailing races were also held, which were won by Lieutenant Robert Witthoff from the Emden. Another officer from the Emden, junior lieutenant These Fikentscher, took the old-time sailors awaiting demobilization on an excursion to the Lauchau mountains, where the ancient monastery, nicknamed the Mecklenburg Castle by the Germans, was located. The tour was accompanied by a ship's orchestra and a whole carriage of provisions and beer.

No money was spared, since the whole event was financed from the premium received by Emden for saving the steamer Dike Rickmers, which the cruiser pulled aground and towed for three days.

On June 2, all sailors to be demobilized were decommissioned from the ship and sent to the barracks on the shore, and the next morning the liner majestically entered the harbor

Hamburg-American line "Patricia", which was supposed to deliver 150 demobilized sailors back to their homeland. Some officers, including the first officer of the Emden, Lieutenant Poyser, also left, having received assignments to other places. In his place was appointed the navigator of the "Emden" Lieutenant Helmut von Mücke, who immediately fell on a bunch of cases related to sending the demobilized home.

The Patricia liner, taking coal, remained in Qingdao long enough for everyone to say goodbye. Finally, the oceanic giant slowly moved away from the pier, raising a long pennant in parting, hanging from the mast tuft to the very surface of the water. On the deck of the liner, the orchestra played the popular tune from the song "How beautiful the world is when you come home." He was echoed by ship orchestras on the decks of cruisers, playing the traditional melody on such occasions "I say goodbye to you, my beautiful city!"

All this was drowned in the farewell cries of the sailors gathered on the decks, the farewell wave of hands and caps. And on the Emden they accepted recruits, and the captain of the 2nd rank, Muller, perfectly understood that this did not bode well for the cruiser for the next six months. To have almost half of the crew of recruits who were barely trained and did not know the life of a ship meant to put a double burden on all the remaining officers, non-commissioned officers and old-time sailors, since in addition to performing their direct duties, they also had to train newcomers.

Müller thought that if he managed to break out again on a solo voyage, he would quickly "fake" the lop-eared recruits on the high seas.

On June 13, the British armored cruiser Minotaur paid a visit to Qingdao. The visit of a foreign ship, as usual, was accompanied by banquets, balls, excursions and sports competitions. The football match between the teams of English and German sailors attracted the most attention. The main time ended in a draw - 2:2. In extra time, the British managed to confirm their skills by scoring three more goals against the Germans. But the Germans managed to win in gymnastics and high jump. During the visit of the Minotaur, the German and English sailors became so friendly with each other that when the English cruiser left, the sailors of the two leading maritime powers of the world were sincerely convinced that they would never have to fight each other. Indeed, it was hard to believe.

On June 20, Admiral Spee left with the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau to sail the Pacific Ocean, intending to go south to Samoa and return to Qingdao only in September.

Before sailing, Count Spee called Muller to him and ordered to take on board a three-month supply of coal and provisions and be in a state of full readiness to go to sea upon receipt of the appropriate order.

Müller was glad that he did not have to go on a campaign with the admiral. With two armored cruisers, the light cruiser always acts as an errand boy. In addition, the south was now unbearably hot, compared with which the climate of Qingdao could be called more than pleasant. In other words, Captain 2nd Rank Muller, dreaming of a solo voyage, just wanted to be away from the admiral's eyes, and since the admiral himself left Qingdao, Muller had nothing against staying in the base.

After the departure of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau with Admiral Spee from Qingdao, the situation for the sailors remaining in the base became more relaxed.

Captain 2nd rank Muller has always been known as a liberal and did not like to complicate the lives of his subordinates, based on the belief that military service is far from honey. Officers daily, and sailors twice a week, he allowed shore leave.

The off-duty officers spent their time on the shore in different ways: riding horses, flirting with ladies on the beach, strolling through the beautiful gorges in the Prinz Heinrich mountains, playing cards in the casino or playing billiards in the German Club. Although everyone was afraid that the cruiser might be sent to Shanghai, where one could die from the heat, in Qingdao itself that summer there was such a heat that even the old-timers did not remember. The gunboat Luhs stationed in Shanghai radioed Müller, begging the Emden to relieve her. Muller laughed it off on the radio - he could not order himself to follow to Shanghai!

This half-asleep state in the height of summer was agitated by the news that came on June 28 about the assassination in Sarajevo of the heir to the Austrian throne and his wife and about the harsh notes that had already been exchanged by the governments of Austria and Serbia. In the wardroom of the Emden, they anxiously awaited news, but by July 6 it began to seem to everyone that the situation was stabilizing and nothing terrible, except for diplomatic demarches, would happen. This was confirmed by the news that came from Berlin that the Kaiser, on his yacht Hohenzollern, set off on his usual annual voyage to the coast of Norway, accompanied by almost the entire High Seas Fleet. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief, and the commander of the Qingdao Naval Base, Captain 1st Rank Zosler, ordered Muller to prepare to leave for Shanghai as a stationer.

Müller received a whole trunk of sealed packages on receipt addressed to the German consul in Shanghai, but when he returned to the Emden, a radio message was waiting for him there, which came from Admiral Spee from the South Pacific. The admiral ordered Muller to stay in Qingdao and not go anywhere. On July 8, the order to send the Emden to Shanghai was officially canceled.

The next day, a warning came from the Admiralty in Berlin about the possibility of war between Austria and Serbia. The warning hinted that if this happened, other countries could be involved in the war.

On 11 July, a new warning came from the Admiralty of a possible confrontation with Britain. Radio room "Emden" around the clock received intercepted messages from foreign ships, talking about the approach of a terrible global crisis.

Unexpectedly, the sizzling heat gave way to a terrible hurricane that hit Qingdao on July 23 and raged for a whole day. The Emden, having raised steam in two boilers, stood at three anchors, ready to go to sea at any moment. On July 23, the hurricane subsided as suddenly as it hit, and the next day the Austro-Hungarian cruiser Kaiserin Elisabeth arrived in Qingdao for a visit.

The Emden had correctly understood the ominous omens caused by this visit: Germany was going to ally with Austria in the event of a war. The Emden officers had several acquaintances among the Austrian officers, and they were invited to dinner. Muller was surprised by the complete calmness of the officers, although mobilization had already been announced in Austria. The commander of the Emden even thought that the situation might not be as bad as it seems here - on the edge of the earth.

However, sad news soon fell on the ships as if from a cornucopia.

On July 25, a message came from Berlin that Austria had presented an ultimatum to Serbia, threatening war.

A day later, on July 26, a reassuring message came from Germany that the German government was considering the whole problem as an internal affair of Austria-Hungary. True, this was followed by an explanation that if Russia came out on the side of the Serbs, then Germany would do the same on the side of Austria.



Russia was in a military alliance with France, and she was in alliance with England, which had Japan as an ally.

There was still hope on the Emden for the possibility of a peaceful outcome, even when the news came that the High Seas Fleet had unexpectedly interrupted its summer maneuvers off the coast of Norway and hastily returned to its bases in Germany.

On 27 July, the Admiralty in Berlin notified Qingdao that Austria had broken off diplomatic relations with Serbia.

On July 28, a message arrived declaring a state of war between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Kingdom of Serbia.

On July 28, the Emden radio room received an order from the Naval Headquarters in Berlin: "Try to connect with the main forces of the squadron."

The cruiser Nuremberg, recalled from the American west coast, was ordered not to return to Qingdao, but to join Admiral Spee's squadron at Ponape in the South Pacific. However, there was no order to mobilize the fleet, but the pre-mobilization situation was there, and it turned, in the absence of Admiral Spee and the commanders of two armored cruisers, Captain 2nd Rank Karl von Muller into a senior German naval officer in the entire vast region of East Asia. And as such, Muller had to decide how he was going to fight alone on a light cruiser in a region where large formations of the English, French and Russian fleets were concentrated, not to mention the entire Japanese fleet, which was considered the third in the world? At the same time, neither bases nor coal stations were foreseen at Emden, since it was quite obvious that in the event of a war, Qingdao would be blocked at best, and at worst captured by the enemy.

In Qingdao there was a powerful coastal radio station and, thanks to it, the Emden commander was quite well aware of the deployment of large ships of potential opponents from Vladivostok to Colombo.

The Russian light cruiser Zhemchug and several destroyer fleets were stationed in Vladivostok. Another Russian cruiser - "Askold" - presumably stood at Wonsan.

There was information that two French armored cruisers, Duplex and Montcalm, were stationed in Vladivostok.

The British armored cruisers Minotaur and Hampshire with several destroyers were at the anchorage of Wei-Ha-Wei north of Qingdao. The English battleship Triumph with a division of destroyers and submarines operated south of Hong Kong. The light cruiser Yarmouth was stationed in Shanghai, while the Newcastle was presumably in Nagasaki.

The Japanese did not want to be considered enemies for the time being, since this would radically change the whole situation. Such a deployment of ships of future opponents opened up a field of activity in the region of French Indochina, off the coast of which the trade routes of the British, French and Russians intersected, while they were actually not guarded.

Muller tried to contact Admiral Spee by sending him a radiogram with the following content: "I ask for permission in the event of a situation envisaged by Combat Plan B" (war with France and Russia), go south to mine the approaches to Saigon and other ports of Indochina in order to cause panic and chaos in all French maritime trade in the area."

There was no answer.

On July 30, without receiving any orders, Captain 2nd Rank Muller, with his authority, announced mobilization readiness on the Emden. Everything that would be dangerous or simply unnecessary in wartime was unloaded ashore, reducing the possibility of fires and making room for excess supplies of coal and provisions. Muller's planned operations in the open ocean rested on one main problem - coal.

Where to get fuel? Huge reserves of both coal and fuel oil were accumulated in Qingdao, but Qingdao could well become unattainable. The only solution to this problem was to capture enemy ships at sea and then reload their coal onto a cruiser. If these ships turn out to be coal miners, then by transferring prize crews from the Emden to them, they could be turned into cruiser support ships, assigning them a rendezvous somewhere in the ocean to supply the Emden with fuel.

These operations had to be carefully planned - after all, even a relatively small ship like the Emden devoured several railroad cars of coal per day. Muller ordered to replenish the crew of the cruiser at the expense of the old German gunboats Tiger, Itis and Kormoran located in Qingdao. In the evening, the Emden officers were released ashore for the last time. The mood of the officers was not particularly cheerful, if not depressed. Many of them were already counting the days when they could, after serving their term in the Far East, return to their homeland. For some, this period ended in September. But now no one even stuttered about it.

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July 31, 1914 at 19:00 "Emden" moved away from the coal wall of Qingdao and in the evening twilight headed for the exit to the sea. Following the cruiser was the Elsbet collier. Soon both ships disappeared into the darkness.

Due to tense relations between Austria and Serbia and the possibility of involving Russia in the brewing conflict, Müller decided not to go south, as he had previously planned, but to the north. The Emden commander wanted to avoid the fate of the Russian ships Varyag and Koreets, which on the eve of the Russian-Japanese war did not leave Chemulpo on time, were blocked by the Japanese fleet and destroyed without causing any damage to the enemy. Muller, on the contrary, wanted to inflict maximum damage on the enemy before his ship was destroyed. His small cruiser, with its insignificant 105-mm guns, was completely unable to defend the fortress of Qingdao. The fortress, having powerful forts, could stand up for itself.

The cruiser was in a state of full combat readiness. Half of the crew took their places according to the combat schedule, the second half slept without undressing, ready to join the combat watch at the first signal. In peacetime, the shifts on the Emden were divided into four shifts, but now - only two. The lower rooms were unbearably hot and stuffy. All portholes were battened down with blackout covers. The ship sailed without lights. Some sailors turned off the electricity in their cockpits and opened the portholes to take a breath of fresh night air.

In the dead of night, the Elsbet turned south, and the Emden lay down on an easterly course. The sea was deserted despite the fine calm weather. Not even the fishing schooners were in sight. But a real storm raged on the air. Lieutenant von Mücke even feared for his eardrums, listening to the conversations of foreign ships and ships. It was clear that there was a lot of booty around, but the war had not yet been declared, and Muller preferred to stay away from the busy sea lanes for the time being, so as not to be discovered ahead of time.

About noon, an English squadron was seen far on the horizon, going somewhere south from Wei-Ha-Wei. It was hoped that the British "Emden" did not notice. During the whole day of August 1, the Emden radio station did not receive a single message from the Admiralty or from Admiral Spee. Only late in the evening, Lieutenant von Mücke, having climbed onto the bridge, reported to Muller that an order had been received announcing the mobilization of the army and navy.

Sunday morning, August 2, began, as usual, with a prayer of thanksgiving, ending with the traditional singing of the old Dutch anthem, "We are all gathered together to give thanks to you." The sailors were dressed in working uniform, which had never before been allowed during a prayer service, and even more so on Sunday. At the end of the prayer, the boatswain's pipes whistled piercingly, and the command was given: "All the crew, gather in the poop!"

The weather was fine. "Emden" plowed the waters of the Yellow Sea at a medium speed. The sailors gathered at the stern waited for what the commander of the ship would tell them. Captain 2nd Rank Muller read out to them a message transmitted by the Qingdao radio station: "His Majesty the Emperor announced on August 1 the mobilization of the army and navy. This forced step was the result of the invasion of Russian troops into the territory of Germany, which led to a state of war between our country and the Russian-French alliance. What has been expected for many years has now become a reality. Without any declaration of war, the enemy armies invaded Germany." In this regard, the German monarch stated: "For 44 years, the German sword was sheathed, although we had many reasons to expose it. But Germany never wanted to act by force anywhere, preferring peaceful rivalry, demonstrating by diligence and labor, commercial and industrial opportunities, scientific and technological progress and intellectual abilities of their people, their right to occupy a place of honor among other nations of the world. And that is why our country aroused malice and envy on the part of those who were unable to equal it in peaceful rivalry and decided to make up with the sword what they could not achieve by peaceful, civilized means. This compels us to take up arms for the very existence of our nation... The war will not be easy. Our enemies have been arming for years to destroy us. And we have no choice. For the sake of the honor of our Fatherland, for the sake of the honor of our ancestors and the life of our descendants, we must stand firm, even if the rest of the world takes up arms against us." After finishing reading the message, Muller added: "I intend to proceed in the direction of Vladivostok. We will wage war against merchant shipping. As far as I know, Russian-French naval forces are being concentrated in the Vladivostok area. Therefore, there is a high probability that we will have to fight soon. I know that I can fully rely on my crew." Then, over the waves of the Yellow Sea, three times "Hurrah!" sounded. In honor of the distant emperor, and the command immediately rang out: "Everything is in its place! Combat Alert!"

At a speed of 15 knots "Emden" went in the direction of the Tsushima Strait. Although Muller declared that he completely relies on his crew, he had a strong anxiety in his soul: after all, a good half of his sailors had not been on board the cruiser for even two months. This in peacetime can lead to some kind of emergency, and in wartime - just a disaster.

On the night of August 3, the Emden entered the sea route between Vladivostok and Shanghai, continuing to move north to the historic Tsushima Strait. At night, the radio announced the beginning of the war between Germany and France. However, this surprised no one. Much more important was the question: Will Great Britain enter the war? Will the British be among his opponents? This worried Müller much more than the Russians and the French combined. Meanwhile, it was reported from Tsingtao that three Russian merchant ships were anchored in Nagasaki.

The night was moonless and impenetrably dark. Visibility was virtually zero.

The Emden was completely blacked out. Every precaution was taken to avoid the release of sparks from the chimneys. The cruiser gave out only a phosphorescent wake from the propellers. The waves, crashing against the bow of the Emden and running along the sides, also shone with a greenish color. It seemed that the ship was moving in a light green frame. Around midnight, when the Emden was approaching the western entrance to the Tsushima Strait, signalmen first discovered any ships coming with lights on. Mueller decided not to get involved. The lights could belong to some warships that had not yet mastered the rules of war or simply did not know that a war had begun. In addition, fishing boats could also carry these lights, and Muller did not want to get into the story that the Russian Baltic squadron got into in 1904, which shot English fishermen at Dogger Bank, mistakenly mistaking their trawlers for Japanese destroyers in the dark.

After midnight the wind picked up and soon reached gale force. About two o'clock in the morning, the signalmen again found the lights of a steamer astern, but due to stormy weather, Muller again decided not to take any action. A raging oncoming storm and pouring downpour forced Muller to change course and head for the eastern entrance to the Tsushima Strait. Around 04:00, the famous island of Tsushima opened up ahead, and a few minutes later, in the first rays of dawn, through the continued lashing downpour, the blurry silhouette of a large ship was discovered. Muller abruptly shifted the engine telegraph to full forward, and the Emden trembled from the transition of the machines to full combat speed. Some on the bridge mistook the unknown ship for the Russian cruiser Askold, but it soon became clear that this was not a warship, but a twin-tube merchant ship. In the gaps of fog and rain, for a moment, its black-painted hull and two large yellow pipes became clearly visible.

Apparently, the Emden was noticed from the ship, and it tried to leave at full speed in a southerly direction, hoping to enter the territorial views of Tsushima Island. "Emden" rushed in pursuit, first giving two warning shots, and then opening fire to kill. But the prey continued to leave, not reacting to the shots. It was not possible to determine whether the cruiser hit the steamer. Both ships continued to move at full speed, burying their noses in the storm waves. Thick black smoke billowing from the Merchant's chimneys interfered with observation from the Emden's bridge. The spray swept over the bridge, penetrating even into the wheelhouse, where everyone was already wet from head to toe.

The cruiser's guns continued to fire. After the 10th shot, the ship slowed down, and after the 12th it stopped, and it began to drift to the left. Quickly approaching the pursued vessel, the Emden raised the signal: "Stop immediately! Turn off the radio!"

The ship sent out continuous distress calls. Despite the storm, a boat was quickly lowered from the Emden, where, under the command of Lieutenant Lauterbach, there was a prize team of twenty armed sailors. The Emden took up a position on the windward side, about 150 meters from the steamer. The prize crew boarded the captured vessel. The radio room and all other key premises of the ship, including the engine room, were immediately taken under guard. Lieutenant Lauterbach checked the ship's papers. It turned out that the ship belongs to the Russian Volunteer Fleet. It was a passenger-and-freight ship "Ryazan" with a displacement of 3,500 tons, built at the German shipyard "Shihau". The ship was sailing from Nagasaki to Vladivostok without cargo, with about 80 passengers on board.

The steamer "Ryazan" became the first prize of the German fleet captured on the high seas during the outbreak of the World War. Due to the fact that there were many women on the Ryazan, Muller decided to deliver his prize to Qingdao. In addition, the captured steamer was ideally suited for the role of an auxiliary cruiser, especially given the speed that she demonstrated, moving away from the chase. His speed was at least 17 knots. Ryazan gave



move, and "Emden" followed her, keeping about 300 meters behind the stern of the ship.

On board the Ryazan, the commander of the prize crew, Lieutenant Lauterbach, a former captain of the postal steamer of the Hamburg-American Line, called up from the reserve, politely and diplomatically answered the passengers' countless questions and the captain's protests. Then the lieutenant dug his head into the study of the Ryazan radio magazine. It became obvious that from the very morning the Ryazan had been in radio communications with the French squadron, which had left Vladivostok and was heading south. This discovery was very important, since the Emden now ran the risk of meeting two French armored cruisers. What a triumph they could crown themselves if they managed to drive the German cruiser away from the captured prize! To avoid such embarrassment, two signalmen with powerful binoculars were sent to the "crow's nest" on the mast. Around 15:00, Emden almost reached the southern tip of Tsushima Island. On the horizon, a small Japanese ship flashed, apparently a fishing boat.

The weather gradually improved, becoming warmer and calmer. The sea was bathed in sunshine. At about 5:00 p.m., a signalman in the crow's nest reported seeing smoke from the chimneys of at least five ships. There was no doubt that this was a French squadron: the armored cruisers Duplex and Montcalm with escort destroyers.

Müller immediately ordered to turn 8 degrees to the left in order to create three Emden tubes and avoid accurate identification by the enemy. The French squadron marched south in front formation. But absolutely nothing happened. The impression was that the French did not notice anything, although Lauterbach on the Ryazan ordered to prepare the boats for launching, and the steamer itself for flooding.

In the evening, when the crew on the Emden was having dinner, a messenger brought Muller to the bridge an intercepted radiogram, transmitted in clear text from the French cruiser Duplex to the small mail steamer Amazon, which said: "The German heavy cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneusenau are blocking Tsushima Strait. Return to Kobe immediately."

Now everything has become more or less clear. The French mistook Emden for Scharnhorst! It is understandable why they passed by without trying to join the battle.

On the morning of August 6, the Emden arrived in Qingdao and anchored in the same place from which she left on July 31. Müller noted with sadness how the war had already changed the wonderful landscape of Qingdao. The forests, which had been cultivated for several generations, were cut down to improve visibility for the fortress gunners.

Behind the stern of the Emden was the mail steamer Prinz Eitel Friedrich, owned by the North German Lloyd. She had already been almost converted into an auxiliary cruiser with the help of guns taken from the old gunboats Iltis, Lukhs and Tiger. At the pier, the liners of the Hamburg-American line "Marcomannia" and "Frisia" were loaded with coal, ready to go to sea as supply ships for the squadron of Admiral Spee.

Soon the Ryazan also came to the port. Muller allowed the crew to rest until eight in the morning, and then the loading of coal began. More than 1000 tons were accepted, coal reserves were placed even on the upper deck. In addition to loading coal on the Emden, there was a lot to do. It was necessary to replenish ammunition, receive spare torpedoes in the port, load up with provisions and drinking water. Hundreds of hammock beds were delivered on board, with which they were going to impose combat posts in order to protect the sailors from splinters. An additional 40 people were taken to the crew of the Emden from the Iltis, Kormoran and the Vaterland river boat. We had to think about where to place them all. In addition, it turned out to be a problem to find accommodation for a doctor transferred to a cruiser from the 77th Saxon artillery regiment, and more

for 25 sailors who arrived from other ships. Complete organizational chaos reigned on board the Emden, and Lieutenant von Mücke, trying not to lose the dignity of the first mate, puzzled over where to get people to complete all the necessary work on time.

The city was restless. Terrified that Qingdao might be bombarded from the sea, the Chinese workers began to scatter, trying to break deep into the mainland. The German police caught them and brought them back, but it was clear that this process could not be stopped. The flight of the Chinese left the docks, railways and mines without the main labor force.

The city was full of all sorts of conjectures. In particular, someone spread a rumor that "Emden" had a fight with the Russian cruiser "Askold", drowned her, but he himself received serious damage and suffered heavy losses in personnel. The chief surgeon of the naval hospital, believing this rumor, prepared the hospital to receive the wounded and was very surprised that Captain 2nd Rank Muller, having come to Qingdao, did not take the wounded ashore. The surgeon was even more surprised when he learned that there were no wounded, no dead, no injuries on the Emden.

From all corners of China, Japan and Korea, citizens of Germany arrived in Qingdao, mostly reservists of the army and navy. They got to Qingdao, some on passing steamers, some on junks, some by rail, despite the strong opposition of the Chinese authorities.

Meanwhile, the prize court in Qingdao confiscated the Ryazan steamer under martial law. The crew and passengers of the Russian ship were taken ashore and later sent by rail to Vladivostok, and the Ryazan was immediately converted into an auxiliary cruiser, renamed Kormoran. From the old Kormoran, eight 105-mm guns were installed on the ship and equipped with a crew under the command of Lieutenant Commander Zukshwert. And "Emden" was preparing for a new exit to the sea.

Hundreds of problems had to be solved at the last minute. There was a laundry room on the cruiser, in which, like on all other ships of the German Far Eastern squadron, the Chinese worked. There were four Chinese laundresses. The eldest was called Joseph on the cruiser, and his three employees were Sidi-1, Sidi-2 and Sidi-3. The Chinese wanted to quit, but they got used to them so much that they persuaded them to stay, doubling their salary.

All four were destined to die on the Emden, and their real names remained unknown.

Finally, all the work was done, and the Emden turned her bow towards the exit from the harbor. On all the ships in Qingdao, the sailors lined up on the decks, saying goodbye to the Emden. The governor of Qingdao, captain 1st rank Meyer-Waldeck, passed the cruiser on his boat and, standing up, put his hand to the visor of his cap. From the bridge of the Emden, Captain 2nd Rank Muller responded in kind. The officers accompanying the governor shouted and waved their caps.

Having given the move, "Emden" slowly moved to the exit from the harbor. The ship's band played "Watch on the Rhine" and sailors lined up on deck sang the solemn words of the national anthem.

The sun shone brightly over Qingdao. Many on the Emden were heartbroken: would they ever return here? The white houses and the mountains that bordered them were slowly receding astern. Bypassing Yunaisan Island at low speed, the Emden reached the outer roadstead of Qingdao, where the Marcomannia steamer, converted into a supply vessel, and the S-90 destroyer were waiting for it.

Suddenly, in the distance, over the Pearl Mountains, a double rainbow flashed, which the Emden regarded as a happy omen. Having entered the outer roadstead, the Emden lay at anchor for half an hour, waiting for the approach of the Prince Eitel Friedrich, and then all the ships were led through the passage in the minefields already exposed around Qingdao. A detachment of three ships went to the open sea. "Eitel Friedrich" and "Marcomannia" immediately turned south, and "Emden" with the destroyer S-90 went north. Soon the cruiser said goodbye to the destroyer, which was supposed to carry out guard duty on the approaches to Qingdao.

"Emden" was left alone. One is deep behind enemy lines. In case the cruiser was lost, all objects that could come up were marked "Nagata-Maru" in order to hide the very fact of the death of the Emden and give rise to new rumors that confuse the enemy.

Under the cover of night, the Emden changed course and overtook the Marcomannia and the Eitel Friedrich. The sea was deserted, and only about ten in the morning on August 8, smoke was noticed on the horizon. Increasing speed, "Emden" headed for the detected smoke, but it turned out to be a Japanese steamer, and the cruiser returned to the detachment.

Frustration reigned on the bridge, usual in false starts. Soon "Marcomannia" turned away with an order to join the detachment to the south - below the parallel of the Japanese island of Ryukyu. And the Emden and Eitel Friedrich took up position on the route between Shanghai and Nagasaki. Around 14:00, smoke was again seen on the horizon, the Emden rushed forward, but again saw a Japanese steamer in front of him. In the evening twilight, the Emden and the Eitel Friedrich turned south to rendezvous with the Marcomannia.

At night, the radio brought a message about the battles in Belgium and East Prussia. The sailors were particularly pleased with the news that the Königin Louise excursion steamer, staffed by volunteers, had laid mines at the very mouth of the Thames. True, the valiant ship, unfortunately, died, but dragged the English cruiser Amphion along with it to the seabed. In the Mediterranean Sea, "Goeben" and "Breslau", blocked in the Strait of Messina by English and French ships, managed to break into the open sea. Emden was also mentioned. According to wire agencies, the cruiser with two captured prizes was in the South China Sea. Foreign radio reports also said that the Canadian Pacific Line Express of Japan was now off the south coast of Japan bound for Hong Kong. It was a huge liner, and Muller, hoping to capture it, sent the cruiser into the Colnett Strait.

The strait - one of the many passages between the Ryukyu Islands - passed at night, approaching the very border of the South Seas. On August 10, the radio broadcast very unpleasant news regarding Japan's position. Japan threatened to go to war if there was any threat to its shipping or if the British protectorates in China were attacked.

From the bridge of the Emden, far on the horizon, they noticed the Japanese cruiser Tone, which, with four destroyers, was heading somewhere south. But the Marcomannia did not arrive at the rendezvous. It was not possible to contact her by radio. On the morning of August 11, Marcomannia finally responded by broadcasting a rather strange message: "I'm heading to the rendezvous point, Give me your seat." No one could understand why the liner needed to know the location of the Emden? The radio operators reported that this radiogram was transmitted by some very powerful station, much more powerful than it was on the Marcomannia. But the radiogram used the German maritime code. Didn't this mean that the Marcomannia, along with its cipher book, had already been captured by the enemy? Muller decided not to take the bait and tried this time to contact Admiral Schlee's squadron by radio, which was already in the range of the cruiser's radio station. The laconic answer followed:

use the radio!"

The radio operator determined that this was the same station that had requested the Emden's seat the day before. Could it be Scharnhorst?

Continuing to worry about the fate of the Marcomannia, Müller led the cruiser south to rendezvous with Admiral Spee's squadron. On August 12, at about noon, one of the Mariana Islands, which belonged to Germany, sailed on the starboard side of the Emden, and the extinct volcano of the island of Pagan rose straight ahead from the horizon, where Admiral Spee appointed a rendezvous for the Emden.

Since mid-June, the Emden sailors had not seen their squadron comrades, and therefore looked forward to meeting them. The island of Pagan rose higher and higher above the ocean. Soon two volcanoes were already visible. The top of one of them was obscured by clouds of smoke. Through binoculars, coconut palms, mango bushes and other tropical greenery of the island were already clearly visible. But the cruisers of Admiral Spee were not yet visible. They were probably on the other side of the island.

Around 17:00, the Titania tender was discovered, proudly carrying the naval flag and guard duty on the approaches to the bay, where the ships of the squadron were stationed. "Emden" and "Titania" exchanged identification signals, and the commanders greeted each other with flag semaphores. The Emden circled the high rocky coast of the island, and a bay suddenly opened up in front of it with the cruisers of Admiral Count Spee standing in it.

It was an unforgettable sight! The sailors of the Emden, accustomed to acting alone, could not even believe that so many German ships had gathered here, at the very end of the world.

The first to catch the eye was the light cruiser Nuremberg, which the crew of the Emden had not seen for many months while the Nuremberg was in Mexican waters, where it had only recently been replaced by the Leipzig.

Further, in the depths of the bay, the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were at anchor, surrounded by auxiliary ships. The Gneisenau was loading coal. A signal from the flagship "Scharnhorst" to "Emden" was determined by the anchorage under the very rock that the cruiser had just rounded.

Maneuvering carefully, the Emden took the indicated place from the starboard side of the Scharnhorst and rumbled its anchor chain. The crews of the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were lined up on deck and greeted the Emden with three cheers. The squadron was doubly glad to see the Emden, since the day before they had intercepted information on the radio that the Emden had engaged in a fierce battle with the Russian cruiser Askold, as a result of which both ships were killed.

A few minutes later, the Eitel Friedrich entered the bay, anchoring not far from the Nuremberg. As soon as the Emden anchored, Captain 2nd Rank Muller was called to the flagship, and a steam boat from the Gneisenau approached the Emden, hoping that the Emden delivered mail from Qingdao to the squadron. But it turned out that no one bothered about this in the heat of the mobilization measures.

At night, the strictest blackouts were observed on the ships. In the radio rooms, they carefully listened to the conversations of the English cruisers darting around.

The sailors of the Emden snored peacefully in their hammocks. They could sleep peacefully, being guarded by the entire squadron. And in the wardroom, ship midshipmen gleefully clinked their glasses, among whom was Prince Franz Joseph von Hohenzollern, the nephew of the Kaiser himself.



They had just been informed from Scharnhorst that an order had been issued to promote them to junior lieutenants. Nothing is ever more rejoicing than the first officer rank!

On August 13, loading of coal began in the morning. The Emden team had not yet had time to get used to the coal emergency. On German ships on foreign voyages or in overseas bases, coal was never loaded by the crew, hiring port loaders for this purpose. Now it was different - there was a war. At about 9 o'clock in the morning, the missing Marcomannia finally arrived in the bay with 5,000 tons of coal on board. It turned out that the radio station on the ship simply failed. Captain 2nd rank Muller, who had reported to the admiral the day before on the state of the Emden and on his first military campaign, was again summoned to Count Spee for a meeting. All commanders of the ships were called to the meeting. The admiral expressed his views on the current situation, emphasizing that he was most concerned about the position of Japan and the problem of supplying the squadron with coal, especially given the huge amount of coal that the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau spend daily. Then he announced that since it was almost impossible to operate in this area due to too many enemy warships, which at any moment the entire mighty Japanese fleet could join, he decided to withdraw the squadron to the western coast of America. Count Spee then asked the officers present for their opinion. Waiting for yours! in order of seniority, Captain 2nd Rank Muller expressed the opinion that the squadron, if it goes on a months-long campaign across the Pacific Ocean, will become completely useless, since it will not cause any damage to the enemy. To put pressure on the enemy by the very fact; the existence of the squadron will also not succeed, because the enemy is much stronger and hardly considers five German cruisers as something that poses a particular threat to her. The enemy will feel threatened only when the squadron inflicts significant damage on him. Therefore, the commander of the Emden proposed sending light cruisers to the Indian Ocean, where there are favorable conditions for waging a cruising war, success in which could positively affect the mindset of the population of India and other countries under British colonial oppression for Germany.

Muller's idea was unexpectedly supported by the chief of staff of the squadron, offering to go to the Indian Ocean with the whole squadron and arrange a real hell for the British there. Admiral Spee replied that he considered this possibility, but rejected this option because of the unsolvable problem of supplying ships with coal. In any case, he would consider sending one of the light cruisers, perhaps the Emden, to the Indian Ocean. In conclusion, the squadron commander announced that he intended to leave the island that evening and ordered to be ready for filming from anchor by 17:30. The Admiral then invited Muller to his quarters for final instructions.

While the admiral set a task for the Emden commander, for the success of which they drank a glass of liquor, an excited flag officer unexpectedly entered the cabin and reported that a radio station message in Qingdao had just been intercepted, saying that Japan had declared war on Germany.

If Admiral Spee had any doubts about his decision to withdraw from this area, now they have all dissipated. To have as an enemy, in addition to the powerful formations of the allied Anglo-French-Russian fleet, also the entire Japanese fleet meant to put the squadron in a completely hopeless position. On the west coast of America, at least, neutral ports can still be found and German agents can be contacted. The Japanese will not go there, fearing the reaction of the United States. In addition, somewhere in Chile or Argentina it will always be possible to load up with coal ...

In the afternoon, Captain 2nd Rank Muller got off the Scharnhorst on a boat, having a written order as follows:

"Pagan, August 13, 1914 No. 151. Accompanied by the Marcomannia steamer, you must

follow to the Indian Ocean, where to start a merciless cruising war. In the sealed package you will find a secret code for communicating with our coal-burning steamers scattered in the ocean. You must remain with the squadron until tomorrow morning. In the morning you will leave on a signal: "Start a separate voyage." With the rest of the ships, I intend to proceed to the western coast of America.

Signed: Count Spee.

By sunset, the Emden weighed anchor and left the bay with the rest of the ships.

The squadron marched in formation of two wake columns. One of them was headed by Scharnhorst. Behind him were: "Gneisenau", "Nuremberg" and "Emden". Closed the system patrol "Titania". On the starboard side of the cruisers there was a second column, consisting of auxiliary ships: "Prince Eitel Friedrich", "York", "Marcomannia", "Mark", "Prince Waldemar", "Holsatia", "State Secretary Kretke", "Governor Jeschke and Longmoon.

Yesterday's civilian steamships, which never sailed in formation, hardly kept their places in the order. Especially in complete darkness and without lights. At dawn, it turned out that they had no semblance of formation left. The steamers wandered in a crowd, trying not to lose visual contact with the cruisers, which continued to go east.

All night, the Emden sailed as part of a squadron, and its crew wondered where they were going this time. Some believed that the squadron was going to Australia, others correctly believed that its path lay to the western coast of America, and then around Cape Horn to the Atlantic.

To their great surprise, at 07:00 on the flagship flags of the signal to Emden flew up: "Start a separate voyage. I wish you complete success." Muller responded with a flag semaphore: "Thank you for your trust. Happy sailing and success." The Emden then raised the signal for the Marcomannia to follow. The ship, which had on board more than 5,000 tons of precious Shanghai coal, approached the Emden, and a signal officer was transferred to the cruiser to ensure uninterrupted communication. And on the cruiser, the officers and sailors who knew nothing continued to wonder where they would now go until the long-awaited order followed: "Course southwest, speed 12 knots." One glance at the map was enough to understand that the Emden was heading for the Indian ocean.

## II

Heading to the Indian Ocean, Captain 2nd Rank Muller was well aware of all the problems that the cruiser would face in the very near future. First, Emden has no base. After Japan entered the war, Qingdao could be forgotten. It might still be possible to return there, but it is no longer possible to escape from there. Secondly, the Marcomannia's coal would not last long, and coal would have to be mined from captured ships, reloading it to the Emden on the high seas. This is difficult and very dangerous for many reasons. And, thirdly, the Bay of Bengal, where Muller planned to break through, is literally teeming with enemy warships, which will immediately begin a real hunt for the Emden. And almost all British, French, Russian and Japanese cruisers operating in this region are stronger than the Emden, and many are faster. Anyone can direct them to the Emden, including neutral ships and native fishermen, not to mention distress signals from captured or sunk ships.

On August 15, Emden, leaving the Mariana Islands astern, turned west, heading

to Angor Island, where Muller hoped to meet another collier. Radio operators carefully listened to the broadcast. On the island of Yap in the group of the western Caroline Islands there was a powerful German radio station, but from August 7 it was silent. Apparently, the island had already been captured by the British. It was still possible to receive the Qingdao radio station, although the entry of Japan into the war certainly meant that Qingdao would in the near future be captured.

Every half an hour, the latest news broadcast by the US news agency sounded on the air. In the evening report on August 15, the Americans reported: "Successful attack by German destroyers on the parking lot of the English fleet. Four British dreadnoughts sunk, several badly damaged. According to information from Japanese naval circles, the Germans are confidently winning the naval war. Rejoicing reigned on the Emden, although it soon became clear that this message was a mere invention of American radio, which manipulated the price of securities on the stock exchange. After Japan entered the war against Germany, for some reason, Emden hoped that the United States, worried about the strengthening of Japan, would enter the war on the side of Germany, and American island bases would be opened for Emden. Everyone was waiting for the appropriate message.

On August 19, the Palau Islands appeared on the horizon, where Müller hoped to meet with another collier, as was clear from the sealed package handed to him by Admiral Spee.

Due to an unaccounted for current, the Emden went to the Palau Islands a little further north than he wanted, and now he had to follow the chain of islands south to Angor Island - the southernmost in the archipelago. At about 11:00, without finding a collier, "Emden" approached Angora - a delightful small island in its tropical beauty.

Even on the way, the signalmen of the cruiser saw the German flag raised over the island. Since there was a radio station on the island and there was a phosphate mining plant, Müller feared that the British had already taken over Angor. Dropping anchor in the lagoon, the Emden began loading coal from the Marcomannia.

Soon a boat with the director of a local phosphate mining company approached the cruiser, who also served as governor on the island. The director appeared in the company of a local doctor, followed by two German businessmen on another boat. All of them were well known on the cruiser, since the Emden had already been here a year earlier. Despite the coal dust standing over the cruiser, the Germans felt at home on it - in insanely distant Germany. In addition to them, reservists began to arrive on the cruiser, asking Muller to enroll them in the crew of the cruiser. All were refused, because "Emden" already had 40 people more than the wartime staff.

At this time, they reported from the radio room that they heard the call signs of the German postal steamer Princess Alice, which was trying in vain to go to Angora, and, indeed, at about 15:00, the Princess Alice appeared from the northwest and soon anchored in three hundred meters seaward of "Emden".

The captain of the ship told Muller that on the eve of the war, the Princess Alice, carrying 17 million shillings in gold, which belonged to the British administration in India, was heading for Hong Kong. Having received the news of the beginning of the war, the steamer went at full speed to neutral Manila. Having received coal there, Alisa received an order through the German consulate to take on board as much water and provisions as possible and immediately proceed to the island of Jap, where she would join Admiral Spee's cruising squadron.

On August 18, the ship approached the island, but, of course, did not find any squadron there, but learned that three English cruisers, the Minotaur, had appeared in the waters of the island the day before.

Hampshire and Yarmouth.

Under fear of bombardment, they ordered the dismantling of the radio station and shot the radio mast. Apparently, they did not know the coastal waters well, and therefore they did not come close to the shore and did not land, not knowing that the German survey vessel Planet was hiding in the depths of the harbor.

The crew of the hydrograph went ashore to engage the British if they decide to land troops on the island. When "Alice" came to Yap, many reservists and volunteers from her team expressed a desire to go ashore and take part in the defense of the island in the event of the return of English ships. But the commander of the "Planets" refused to volunteer. He had neither weapons nor food to deploy a large garrison on the island.

After standing there for three hours, "Alice" again went to sea, resolutely not knowing what to do next, until she received a radio from the "Emden". From the news that was known to the captain of the Alice, the commander of the Emden was informed that Japan had presented an ultimatum to Germany: by September 5, withdraw all troops from Qingdao and clear the waters of East Asia from their warships.

Japan demanded a response by 23 August. In addition, "Alice" brought a bunch of American newspapers from Manila, filled with the most incredible stories. One of these stories told that a gigantic naval battle took place in the North Sea, in which at least 28 German and 16 English ships were lost, including the flagship battleship of the commander-in-chief of the British fleet, Admiral Jellicoe.

Inspection of the "Alice" showed that the ship was completely unsuitable for wartime service. They reloaded what they had time, including medicines and cigarettes, the supply of which was running out on the Emden, and with the onset of darkness, the Emden again disappeared into the open sea.

Müller tried to contact Admiral Spee by radio to report to him about the Japanese ultimatum. But the squadron was silent.

On the evening of August 22, the islands of the Malacca archipelago appeared on the horizon. With the onset of darkness, the Emden entered the strait, and in the morning the navigator reported that the cruiser had crossed the equator. For a good half of the crew, this event happened for the first time, but no traditional celebrations on this occasion were organized on the cruiser. At night, radio contact was established with the German collier Linden and he was assigned a rendezvous in Langini Bay on the island of Sumatra.

On the morning of August 23, smoke was seen right along the bow on the horizon, but as he approached, Muller for the umpteenth time saw a Japanese steamer sailing from Manila to Australia in front of him. Muller did not know what to do. He did not receive any official reports on the state of war between Japan and Germany. In addition, he knew that it was today that the Japanese ultimatum presented to Germany expired. Müller was almost certain that Germany would reject the ultimatum, but the worm of doubt tormented him. What if his country, for the sake of saving Qingdao, will make some concessions or come up with some kind of counterproposals? And he, having drowned the ship, will spoil the whole diplomatic game for his government. Reluctantly, he allowed the steamer to pass, hoping that they would not be able to identify the Emden as a German cruiser.

At night, several lights were seen from the Emden, but they did not react. The main thing was to get into the Indian Ocean unnoticed, so that at least the first blow would take the enemy completely by surprise.



A brilliant dawn on August 24 caught the Emden off the east coast of the Portuguese island of Timor. During the day, the cruiser prepared to load coal. At dawn, Muller hoped to meet in the Nusa Besi Strait with the Tannenfels collier, who had 5,000 tons of good coal in his holds.

Coal "Marcomannia" was decided to declare an emergency reserve and spend it only under critical circumstances. The greedy mouths of the furnaces demanded coal constantly, and no matter how huge the amount of 5000 tons seemed, it was not enough for a very short time. The signalmen peered attentively at the horizon, trying to find the Tannenfels, but the collier did not appear. Later it turned out that the Dutch guards pointed the English destroyers at him, and the collier was taken to Hong Kong. In the meantime, Emden again had to take coal from the Marcomania. Having finished loading at 17:00, Emden went north along the coast of Timor, hoping to meet with another German collier, Offenbach. On the banks of the Timor, fires were being lit, illuminating the tropical night with some supernatural light.

Dawn on August 25 found the Emden sailing through a tropical paradise. The bright blue sea, sparkling in the sun, crashed against the shores of the islands overgrown with palm trees. Luxurious tropical forests covered the coastal hills. White smoke from the craters of volcanoes beautifully went into the endless blue sky. All this was fabulously beautiful, but the mood was spoiled by the fact that most of these islands were inhabited. From them, they could easily detect and identify the Emden, and then inform the British about it.

In the Emden's radio room, they heard conversations between two Dutch warships that were somewhere nearby. Then the Siamese radio station from Singora broke into the air, broadcasting in English. She announced the capture of Liege and Namur by the German troops, which was met on the Emden with shouts of delight.

At night, the Emden passed the Tiger Islands. Radio operators received a Dutch radio message confirming that Japan had declared war on Germany. A reliable radio commentary confirmed that the four great powers and several Balkan countries were now at war with Germany and Austria-Hungary, that the French government had moved to Bordeaux, and that a fierce battle was going on with the Russians in East Prussia, in the Tannenberg region. troops. The German soldiers were already fighting on all fronts, and the sailors of the Emden saw nothing but an empty sea and fabulous islands.

In the morning, approaching the place of the planned rendezvous with the Offenbach collier, from the Emden they found some kind of warship approaching the cruiser.

"Raise the flags! Mueller ordered. "Prepare for battle!"

Most likely, the unknown ship was supposed to be Dutch, but the Emden was ready for anything. An unknown ship also raised its topmast flags, which in all the fleets of the world meant readiness for battle.

The gunners of the Emden stood by the guns, waiting for the order to open fire. If it was an enemy ship, then the situation looked very serious: "Emden" was "under the coast" and, in order to leave the bay, was forced to approach under fire. Before the unknown ship was no more than 3000 meters, when, finally, we managed to make out its flag. This, as expected, was the Dutchman - the Tromp coastal defense battleship, which has turret artillery with 9.4-inch caliber guns.

The Emden turned to the left, but the Tromp continued to approach, then turned and followed the German cruiser north to Tana Bay, where Muller expected to meet the Offenbach collier. There really was a coal miner in the bay, but the joy of the German sailors quickly faded, since it was not Offenbach, but a Dutch steamer

"Batavia" - collier "Trompa". Anchored in the bay, both ships watched each other suspiciously. Soon the Marcomannia also came into the bay.

An officer was sent from the Tromp to the Emden with an invitation to Muller to come to the Dutch battleship.

Müller changed into full dress uniform, ordered the command boat launched, and arrived at the Tromp. There, the Dutch commander informed Muller that although the Dutch sympathized with the Germans in the outbreak of war, they were ordered to remain strictly neutral, and therefore could not allow the loading of coal here, detaining the Offenbach at the border of territorial waters. The Tromp commander then friendly invited Muller to have a beer with him. Mueller refused.

He needed Dutch sympathies much less than he needed coal.

The Emden and the Marcomannia weighed anchor and headed out to sea. Tromp followed them. The Emden lay on a false northwest course so that the Tromp would not understand its true intentions. It was not at all excluded that the Tromp would report everything to the British.

The Emden was moving so fast that the Marcomannia could barely keep up with it. Protecting the neutrality of the Netherlands, Tromp escorted the German ships to the three-mile boundary of territorial waters, and then turned sharply to the right. As soon as the Dutch ironclad was out of sight, the German ships turned to the southwest. In the evening, a Dutch message was intercepted, transmitted in clear text, that a white destroyer with four funnels was kept at sea off Batavia, which could very well be English. Fortunately, the full moon was shining in the sky, and the destroyer would hardly have been able to get close to the Emden unnoticed.

On the night of August 28, everyone on the Emden was seized with a sense of danger. Having passed the chain of Sunda islands, the cruiser entered the Lombok Strait, leading to the Indian Ocean. Mueller was nervous. The exit from the strait could well have been blocked by the enemy, who found out about the Emden campaign.

A mass of fishing sailboats saw the Emden and could identify it as a German cruiser by three chimneys, since English cruisers had either two or four chimneys. Lieutenant Mücke expressed the opinion that nothing terrible would happen if a fourth fake chimney was built from improvised material. The proposal was accepted, and work immediately began to boil. From tarpaulin, canvas and linoleum, a fake chimney was quickly built and placed in front of the first real one. And on time. When dawn broke, several sailing junks slipped literally under the nose of the Emden, from which they probably saw the Emden, but they should have mistaken it for a four-tube English cruiser.

Finally, the Lombok Strait remained astern. The Emden entered the Indian Ocean. Müller chuckled, "The fox broke into the chicken coop." The stress of the last few days has subsided. The mood of the crew was upbeat. Ahead of the cruiser lay the endless expanse of a huge ocean.

III

Now, when, according to the commander of the Emden, "the fox broke into the chicken coop", it is necessary

it was to be remembered that the behavior of the fox in the chicken coop was carefully regulated by the laws of international law.

The main document of these laws was the Paris Declaration of 1856. To date, it has been signed by all maritime powers, with the exception of Spain, the United States and Mexico. In its very first article, the Declaration forbade: "privateing", i.e. seizure of prizes by private individuals who have received appropriate licenses from the state. The second and third articles of the agreement dealt with the handling of enemy cargo under a neutral flag and neutral cargo under an enemy flag.

With regard to the conduct of cruiser warfare, the Second Hague Conference of 1907 offered a solution to many problems, reaching, among other things, agreement in the following areas: the treatment of enemy merchant ships at the opening of hostilities, the bombardment by naval forces of coastal cities and enemy installations, and the application of the Geneva Convention to rules of warfare at sea.

All these agreements boiled down to protecting defenseless merchant ships and their crews from the complete arbitrariness of enemy warships. In particular, the commanders of warships were instructed to take all measures to save the lives of the sailors of captured or sunk ships. Unfortunately, at the end of these noble articles there was a postscript "if the combat situation permits", giving everyone the opportunity to interpret these articles at their own discretion.

On the afternoon of August 29, Emden was already 80 kilometers from the coast of Sumatra. The sea was empty, absolutely nothing happened. The sailors constantly worked, keeping the ship clean, which was not at all easy in the conditions of the tropics and constant coal loading. Everything on the ship sucked the coal dust like a magnet. First Lieutenant von Mücke, dissatisfied with the sight of a hastily made false pipe, was constructing a new one - more elegant and oval in cross section, like on the English cruiser Yarmouth. The pipe turned out great. One of the mechanics even suggested putting stokers with cigarettes there so that tobacco smoke would come out of the chimney. However, this proposal could not be carried out, even if it was very desirable. The stock of cigarettes and cigars on the Emden was running low. The supply of fresh provisions and fresh water was coming to an end. I had to ration everything down to soap. The Chinese laundresses came up with some new way of doing laundry without soap. As a result, the uniform of the sailors acquired some kind of yellowish tint, like that of the deck boards ...

On Sunday, August 30, Emden was south of the island of Java. On the air were heard the conversations of several ships nearby. A ship, identifying itself with the call sign "QMD", was transmitting orders to others. It could be the English armored cruiser Hampshire, and you had to be on the lookout. Signalers watched the horizon, but it was empty. From the latest news of the Dutch radio, it became known that the rapid advance of the German troops on Paris continues. And the Emden, still undiscovered by anyone, continued to sail across the Indian Ocean, also unable to find anyone yet.

In the evening twilight of September 3, two small islands appeared right along the course, and a little later one of them, Simolier, grew out of the ocean. Under cover of this island, Müller hoped to receive coal tomorrow from the German steamship Ulm.

Simolier Island was shaped like a banana, curved towards Sumatra. In the center of this curve was hidden a bay with a very narrow entrance. In the bay itself there was a small island that played the role of a natural breakwater. It could be bypassed either from the north or from the south. Behind this island was a whole chain of coral reefs that made navigation very difficult. The ship had to go in very complex zigzags. But

this whole small archipelago completely closed the inner part of the bay from prying eyes and did not allow here the breaking wave from the ocean. The water in the bay was as smooth as a pond. This place was called the port of Langini, and was ideal for loading coal.

All night the Emden sailed at low speed near the island, waiting for dawn to enter the bay. Muller continued to be disturbed by his radio communications by an unknown ship with the call sign "QMD", which was clearly somewhere in the immediate vicinity. The commander of this "QMD" ordered other ships to carefully inspect the waters of the Dutch East Indies, where German warships and steamers could take refuge.

At dawn on September 4, the Emden entered the lagoon. The island was a solid green cap of impenetrable jungle, breathing malarial fumes. Following was the Marcomannia, keeping strictly in the wake of the cruiser. To the general disappointment, Ulm was not in the bay. Again I had to take coal from the Marcomannia. The next loading began at 9 am.

Near the shore, on stilts, are the huts of a native village. Frightened by the formidable sight of the Emden, the natives did not appear from their huts for a long time. Finally, some of them, plucking up courage, approached Emden on their pirogues, offering coconuts and oysters for sale. Oysters, which looked too suspicious, the doctor forbade buying, but they bought a lot of coconuts. Or rather, they didn't buy it, but exchanged it for empty bottles, which for some reason the natives really liked. The sailors opened the nuts with cleavers and drank thick sweet milk with pleasure.

In the evening, having received 450 tons of coal, the loading was interrupted. People needed rest. Because of the heat and stuffiness, many could no longer fall asleep in the cabins and cockpits, preferring to lie down directly on the upper deck or on mattresses in the wardroom, as Second Lieutenant Schull did. When the officer woke up, he heard the loud laughter of his comrades. It turns out that while he was sleeping, the ship's cat, captured from Qingdao, nestled between his legs, littered with five kittens. According to the laws of Germany, anyone born on a ship under the German flag automatically became a citizen of the German state. In the place where a large sofa once stood in the wardroom, they built a wooden pen for a cat and her kittens. Soon the kittens got to their feet and began to make exploratory trips around the wardroom. The officers had to carefully monitor their feet so as not to inadvertently step on one of them.

At six o'clock in the morning on September 5, the loading of coal resumed. Müller hoped to make the most of the morning hours before the heat became unbearable. At about 08:00, signalmen in the crow's nest reported that some white boat flying the Dutch flag was entering the bay, and after a while a well-groomed white steamer anchored near the Emden, bringing representatives of the local Dutch administration to the bay. The commander of the "Emden" tried to explain that the cruiser had arrived in the bay the day before at 9 am. To this, the Dutchman answered with a laugh that not at 9, but at 7 in the morning. Thus, 24 hours have expired, and the cruiser, together with her collier, must immediately leave the bay.

In the presence of the Dutchman, Müller called his chief engineer Lieutenant Commander Ellerbroek and asked him when the Emden could start? He, correctly understanding the situation, replied that it would take at least two hours to raise the steam, although the boilers had been ready for a long time. Thus, the cruiser will be able to leave at 11:00. Having fulfilled his official duty, the Dutch official drank a glass of whiskey for the success of the cruiser (he also sympathized with Germany) and took his leave.

Having gone out to sea, "Emden" lay on a false course and was soon closed by a tropical downpour. Under his cover, the cruiser turned to the northwest, entering the shipping route between Colombo and Calcutta.

On September 9, at around 11:00 pm, white lights were detected four degrees to starboard bow. Finally! "Emden" at full speed rushed to these fires, ordering the signal "Marcomannia"! follow him. The battle alarm bells blared on the Cruiser. A steamship carrying white lights could well have been escorted by warships. And in such cases, in order to escape, you always need to have time to open fire first. Although the night was dark, the light-carrying steamer gradually began to take shape. It was a one-pipe merchant ship. Müller looked with displeasure at the pipes of the Emden. When moving at full speed, clouds of sparks rained down from them, unmasking the cruiser. This is how the vaunted Shanghai coal behaved in the furnaces, which was called "smokeless" in advertising. The steamer, however, did not seem to notice at all that someone was chasing him. The Emden fired two warning shots, reminding the ship that there was a war going on in the Indian Ocean. A searchlight on the steamer gave the order: "Immediately stop! Turn off the radio! Armed with rifles and revolvers, the prize crew quickly boarded the ship.

On the bridge of the "Emden" they were anxiously waiting for a message from Lieutenant Lauterbach, who for the first time since the "Ryazan" had the opportunity to fulfill his duties. The minutes ticked by. Finally, Lauterbach signaled: "Greek ship Pontoporos."

Mueller gritted his teeth. Neutral again! A neutral that needs to be released so that tomorrow everyone knows that the Emden is in the Indian Ocean. But Lauterbach's message continued: "The cargo is 6,500 tons of Indian coal destined for the British. The steamer goes from Bombay to Calcutta.

This was an excellent lead, since the coal was destined for the British. Muller decided to seize the cargo as "military contraband". By order of the commander, Lauterbach offered the Greek captain a "German charter" with generous compensation. In other words, this meant that the Greek from now on became the collier of the Emden.

Everything was fine: "Emden" acquired 6500 tons of coal, keeping the secret of his stay in the Indian Ocean. The bad thing was that the "Greek" was very slow, squeezing less than 9 knots out of their cars. But anyway, the beginning was promising.

The closeness of the tropical night, fortunately, alternated with unexpectedly incoming downpour squalls. Dawn on September 10 found the Emden in a middle course. On the starboard side of it was the Marcomannia, on the left was the Pontoporos. The detachment was heading northwest.

Around 09:00 a large puff of smoke appeared over the northern horizon. Leaving behind the stern "Marcomannia" and "Pontoporos", "Emden" rushed at full speed in this direction. Soon, the dark silhouette of a large steamer rose above the horizon. A radio antenna was strung on its masts, and some white structures were visible on the deck, reminiscent of gun mounts from afar. Perhaps it was an auxiliary cruiser? But the ship was not under the military flag.

On the "Emden" they were ready for anything and, carefully approaching the steamer, until they showed their flag. On the ship, apparently, they still mistook the Emden for an English ship and themselves went to approach it. From the bridge of the German cruiser, it was already clear that the strange white structures on the deck of the ship were not gun mounts, but what they were intended for was not yet clear. The Emden's bow gun fired a warning shot. At the same time, the German flag was raised on the gaff, and on the mast - a signal according to the international code: "Stop! Turn off the radio! The steamer stopped. The Emden approached him within voice range. From the bridge of the cruiser, through a megaphone, they repeated the order not to use the radio. From the stern porthole of the ship, a bundle of burning papers flew overboard. There was no doubt that

the captain was destroying secret documents. The prize team, led by Lieutenant von Levetsov, boarded the ship. It turned out that it was an English steamship with a displacement of 3413 tons called the Hindu, built in 1904.

The Hindu was owned by the James Nurse shipping company and operated on the line between Calcutta and Bombay. The ship was currently on a charter from the Government of India to transport troops to Bombay and had already been converted into a troop transport. The strange white superstructures on the deck turned out to be horse stalls.

Müller ordered provisions to be reloaded from the transport. The sea was calm, making it easy. Lieutenant Mücke, being the "house manager" of the "Emden" as a senior assistant to the commander, was most worried about the soap, the supply of which was practically exhausted, and washing on the cruiser turned into a luxury. So much soap was now found on the Indus that the Emden was supplied for many months. The sailors of the cruiser ransacked the premises of the Hindu, trying to determine what should be transported to the Emden in the first place.

Unloading a captured ship was also an art that had yet to be learned. I wanted to take everything. No one knew when such an opportunity would arise again. Lieutenant Lauterbach tried to make sure that the sailors did not take anything superfluous and unnecessary, but he did not always succeed. Entire bundles of blue silk kimonos were raised with laughter at the Emden. The deck of the Emden began to take on an exotic look. On it lay piles of windbreakers, pith helmets, maps, chronometers, binoculars, sacks of flour, potatoes, carcasses of fresh meat, packs of tobacco. Sausages, ham, chocolate, bottles of claret and cognac were stored in a specially designated place at the stern. All delicacies, except for alcohol, were distributed to the crew.

Hundreds of cigarettes were smoked on the deck of the Emden during the night. It seemed that the cruiser was all strewn with fireflies. After unloading "Indus" it was decided to flood. His team was transferred to the Marcomannia. Then the kingstones were opened on the ship, and the Emden, moving away, opened fire on the ship, which was fired by the bow and stern guns. "Indus" "swallowed" six shells, but stubbornly did not want to sink. The agony of the ship lasted more than an hour. At first it seemed that the ship was not going to sink at all, then the Hindu began to slowly sink. At last the water rushed through the portholes and began to cover the upper deck. Remaining on an even keel, the steamer disappeared from the surface of the sea. For some time, a powerful whirlpool arose at the site of the death of the Hindu, and then the sea became calm again. In a silent stupor, the sailors of the Emden, for the first time in their lives, watched the sinking of the ship. It reminded them of the death of a living being. For several minutes they continued to look in silence at the closing waves, where a large steamer had just stopped. Even the mere cynics seem to have their tongues stuck to their throats. On the deck of the Marcomannia, the captain of the Hindu was weeping, not hiding his tears. On the Emden, they wanted to sink all the boats of the sunken steamer, but this turned out to be not as simple as it was believed, trying to smash them with a cruiser's ram. The blows turned out to be sliding, the boats skidded to the side of the cruiser, and it was a pity to spend shells on them. In the end, they spat on this matter. The loss of the steamer will somehow be found out when she does not arrive in Bombay on the 15th September as expected. Before, hardly. Then they will start looking for "Indus" and will not immediately understand where he disappeared.

The Emden, the Marcomannia and the Pontoporos again headed towards Calcutta. On September 11, at about 14:00, the Emden signalmen, on the right of the bow, again found smoke on the horizon. The cruiser approached, and soon the typical white superstructures of a passenger liner rose above the horizon.

The liner could be another military transport. A warning shot was fired from the Emden and the German flag was raised on the mast. Müller noted with satisfaction that there was no radio antenna on the ship. Lieutenant Lauterbach with the prize crew boarded the steamer and found out that the new prize was an English steamer.

"Lowet" with a displacement of 6012 tons, built in 1911 for the Anglo-Indian shipping company Vavreka.

The Lowet crew was given time to collect their personal belongings and sent to the Marcomannia. On the liner, the kingstones were opened and several shots were fired at the waterline. He sank as long as the Hindu. With the onset of darkness, the Emden departed. On the deck of the Marcomannia, the captains of the Hindu and the Lowet embraced. Both were delighted to find a friend misfortune.

Lieutenant Lauterbach returned to the Emden with a pile of fresh newspapers. Newspapers were an invaluable source of information, although this information was one-sided - about the continuous victories of the Allies and the defeats of Germany. On the Emden, this no longer surprised anyone - from the very beginning of the war, the English press fed its readers with incredible inventions, not at all embarrassed by their absurdity. Newspapers wrote about the destruction of several German armies, that Germany itself was close to complete collapse due to famine, revolution and the mass suicide of generals.

Huge headlines spoke of the death of the crown prince, the wounding of the emperor, the withdrawal of Bavaria from the German Empire. The sailors were especially amused by the "official" report of the Reuters agency, which said that "according to updated data", the German cruiser Emden died in battle with the Russian cruiser Askold.

One of the newspapers published a map of the post-war division of Germany. France got vast areas up to the borders of Bavaria. Denmark expanded its holdings to Wismar, including Wittenberg, Magdeburg, Hanover and Bremen. England got Oldenburg. The territories east of the Elbe, including Saxony, were ceded to Russia. Germany itself was left with only Thuringia.

Lieutenant Mücke gathered the sailors on the forecastle, hung a large map of Europe there and had a conversation with them about the situation at home, trying to filter out all the absurdity contained in the English newspapers. On the night of September 12, the lights of the Kolkata lighthouse were seen from the bridge of the Emden. Müller hoped to seize a pilot ship from Calcutta and destroy the lightship's radio station, which could generally suspend all navigation between the main ports of India, since not a single ship could enter the complex mouth of the Hooghly River from the sea without the help of a pilot. On the Marcomannia, the captured captains awaited the arrival of new comrades in misfortune and bridge partners.

At least three steamboats were sailing down the river, heading for the exit to the open sea. The Emden was waiting. At 10:00 pm, the lights of the first of the expected steamers were seen. The Emden approached and stopped the ship. In order not to scare the others with the sound of a warning shot, the sirens were turned on on the cruiser, sending a signal lamp an order to stop and not use the radio station. Lieutenant Lauterbach with the prize party was sent to this vessel, which turned out to be the British bulk carrier "Kabinga", with a displacement of 4657 tons, built in 1907. The steamer belonged to the English shipping company Bucknell. The Kabinga was heading from Calcutta to New York via Bombay, Port Said and the Mediterranean Sea, carrying a valuable general cargo that belonged mostly to the Americans.

Müller could have sunk the Kabinga as an enemy ship, but he was embarrassed that the Americans were the recipients of the cargo. Who they were and what part of the cargo belongs to them - it was possible to find out after a thorough study of the ship's documents, for which there was no time. And there was no doubt that the Americans would make demands for restitution. In addition, it was already necessary to put the prisoners who were on the Marcomannia somewhere. The wife and son of the captain were on board the Kabinga, and Müller decided to release the Kabinga, transferring all the prisoners to it. But to do this not before others fall into his network

steamboats going to and from Calcutta.

Three hours later, new lights were discovered on the approach to the port. Soon a single-pipe steamer was discovered, on which a prize team led by Lieutenant von Levetsov was landed. The steamer turned out to be the English collier Kaillin, built in 1908 and owned by the Connell brothers. The Kaillin sailed from Calcutta to Bombay with six thousand tons of Indian coal in her holds. Thus, the Emden had at its disposal an impressive squadron of four ships.

The entire detachment was moving at low speed towards Calcutta, since the Kaillin could only go at an eight-knot course. "Emden" led the system. Behind her stern from the port side were the Pontoporos and Kaillin, and from the starboard side, the Kabinga and Marcomannia. All steamers were carefully darkened. No one knew what the darkness could hide in itself with so many English warships in this region. On the morning of September 13, they decided to put an end to the Kaillin. He was too slow-moving to be turned into his collier. Having transferred his team to the Kabinga, the kingstones were opened on the Kaillin, and the Emden fired two shells into the waterline. Within a few minutes, the collier stood upright in the water and stern forward went to the bottom. Of course, it was a pity to burn 6500 tons of coal, but there was nothing to do. "Emden" continued to lead the entire detachment in the direction of Calcutta.

Soon a new column of smoke was discovered to the right of the bow. Everything was as before: first, smoke appeared, then masts, pipes and superstructures grew above the horizon, and then the whole ship. The Emden approached him at an acute angle so that he could not be accurately identified. Lauterbach and his men boarded the new victim and reported almost immediately that it was the 7,615-ton steamer Diplomat, recently built in 1912 and owned by the Charenta shipping company. He went from Calcutta to England with a cargo of 10,000 tons of tea, which made the Emden unheard of happy. It was the most valuable booty that the cruiser had managed to capture so far. Müller decided to sink the steamer with demolition charges, and the mine officer of the cruiser, Lieutenant Wittgeft, was sent to the Diplomat with a team of demolition men.

Meanwhile, on the deck of the doomed steamer, Lieutenant Lauterbach was approached by one of the senior officials of the company, who was heading aboard the Diplomat to England, where he hoped to spend a long vacation. In a not very kind tone, he demanded that the German sailors take out his trunk with silver prize cups for victories in horse racing and golf from the luggage hold. Lauterbach politely replied that the German sailors were not porters. Their task is to destroy the ship.

After Lieutenant Wittgeft, having finished placing explosive charges, appeared on the upper deck, the Emden was nowhere to be seen. Lauterbach pointed towards the horizon: "He caught someone else there." Soon the cruiser appeared, leading a new victim. After the bombers prepared the Diplomat for the explosion, its crew and passengers, including an offended official clutching golf clubs, were transferred to the Kabinga. Meanwhile, the Emden approached the Diplomat again with its new victim. It was a "neutral" - the Italian ship "Loredano", where they landed a prize team led by Lieutenant Levetsov and Prince Hohenzollern. The captain of the Loredano was asked to take all the passengers and crew from the captured ships and deliver them to Calcutta, where he was going anyway. The cost of feeding them on the way is compensated to him. The captain hesitated, pleading the laws of neutrality. Müller was angry: if the captain did not agree, the Kabinga would be sunk.

While this discussion was going on, Diplomat was blown up. The bow of the ship was torn off, and, raising the stern into the air, it began to go into the water. Hundreds of boxes of tea spilled out of the hold into the sea. This sight so affected the captain of the Loredano that he agreed



take on board the prisoners. But it was already too late. It was getting dark quickly, and it was risky to transport more than 200 prisoners in such conditions. They took the word from the Italian captain not to talk about the Emden and released him. But before moving again towards Calcutta, the Italian stood still for a long time, catching boxes of tea from the water. To give the Loredano a false impression of their course, the Emden led the rest of the ships to the southwest. Having gone out of sight from the Italian steamer, the detachment turned south, and then north-west, entering the shipping line between Calcutta and Madras.

Around 22:00, the signalman in the "crow's nest" reported on the lights from the starboard side. The Emden turned sharply to the right and approached the lights, signaling with a searchlight: "Stop. Do not use radio. Define yourself." It turned out that this was another Italian ship, the Dandolo.

"Thank you. Happy sailing!" signaled the Emden, turning aside and disappearing into the darkness again.

At dawn on September 14, Muller decided to release the Kabinga, where the prisoners from the Marcomannia were transported. The radio station "Kabingi" was put out of action. Transportation of people on boats and boats took a long time. At this moment, smoke was again seen in the south, and the Emden, leaving her wards, rushed at full speed towards new prey. The new victim was the English freighter Trebbach, sailing to Calcutta from Negabatan in ballast. Soon his crew was transferred to the Kabinga, and the ship was blown up. It has already become a rule: to sink captured ships with artillery during the day, and at night with demolition charges, so as not to betray their place with bright flashes of guns. However, now, with the explosion of the Trebbach, it turned out not at all what they wanted - coal dust flared up brightly from the explosion, illuminating everything for miles around. Then "Kabinga" was released and went back to Calcutta. (This action, although it revealed the whereabouts of the Emden, made the cruiser immediately famous throughout the world.

The world press in very favorable tones began to write about the cruiser and its commander, who took a significant risk, in this way freeing the prisoners. The crews and passengers from the captured ships who arrived in Calcutta vying with each other told how politely they were treated, how they were given the opportunity to save personal belongings, how noble the German commander was, who decided to let the Kabinga go so as not to jeopardize the captain's wife and his infant. The Indian newspapers immediately printed all these stories, which made the Emden and its commander, despite the damage done to British shipping, famous and popular overnight). Before the Kabinga was out of sight, the Emden's signalmen again spotted some lights in the distance. "Emden" went to these lights, but this time the unknown steamer tried to leave. Neither the sirens nor the warning shots could stop him. Only after the shell hit him in the nose did the steamer stop and begin to release steam.

Coming closer, from the Emden they asked through a megaphone: "What kind of ship?" "Mafison clan," was the answer. "English?" - clarified from Emden. "No. British!" - with some kind of challenge they answered from the ship.

For such audacity, the ship was decided to be immediately drowned. The team of Lauterbach, landed on the ship, found out that the Clan Maphison, with a displacement of 4775 tons, was going from England to Calcutta. It belonged to the Scottish company "Clan" and had a Scottish captain.

In its vast holds, the ship carried cars, locomotives, steam engines, bicycles, typewriters and many other valuable cargoes. The only passenger on the ship was a racehorse, which was taken as a favorite to the Calcutta hippodrome. The horse had to be shot to save it from prolonged torment in the ocean

waves. The crew of the ship was transferred to the Marcomannia, and the ship itself was drowned by opening the kingstones and detonating explosive charges in the holds.

The Emden turned east. Müller's original intention was to come to the deserted anchorage at Babasore to load coal, but a rising southeasterly wind prevented this plan from being carried out. Under such conditions, the cruiser could not moor with a log to the coal miner. But it was no longer possible to remain in the Calcutta area. At night, radio operators intercepted a radio from Calcutta, which said: "According to the testimony of the captain of the Italian steamer Loredano, the German cruiser Emden sank the steamers Diplomat, Kabinga and Pontoporos at the point 86 ° 24 'E. duty, and 18 ° north latitude

This Italian captain turned out to be a good goose, who spoke so ardently about sympathies for the Germans and about his neutrality and surrendered the Emden at the first opportunity. (The sailors of the Emden later learned from the newspapers that the Italian government had awarded the captain a gold watch "for his courageous duty to uphold his neutrality.")

On the same night, Kabinga, having corrected its radio station, broadcast on the air: "The German cruiser Emden with the coal miner Marcomannia sank the ships: Hindu, Lovet, Diplomat, Trebbach and Kaillin on approach to Calcutta. "Kabinga" with all the crews of the sunken ships has been released and is safe.

Now everyone knew about the presence of the Emden in the Bay of Bengal. A planned attack on the Kolkata lightship was cancelled. It's time to change the operational hunting area.

#### IV

September 16 "Emden" headed for the Andaman Islands. The sea was completely calm. Such an excellent opportunity for loading coal was not to be missed. The Emden stood aboard the Pontoporos, and another round of hard labor began. By 23:00, 450 tons were received, almost completely filling the bunker. The loading was attended by 60 Indian stokers from the Clan Maphison, who were promised free food and payment in Mexican dollars. The participation of the Indians in loading made it possible to temporarily release the Emden stokers from this work, who in the full sense of the word were in real hell, carrying six-hour watches at the furnaces at a temperature of 60-70 degrees Celsius. Every wrong move in the stokers led to severe burns, and any mistake could lead to an explosion of boilers and a catastrophe. The boilers required constant cleaning and replacement of tubes. Usually the cruiser went under six boilers, which gave her a speed of 18 knots to enable her to carry out repairs on the rest. The boilers were cleaned every five days. Stokers at a temperature of 80-90 degrees Celsius climbed inside the boilers to beat off scale with sledgehammers and clean out the ash, which most of all accumulated when using Indian coal. But for the uninterrupted operation of the boilers, not only coal was needed, but also fresh water. More than 25 tons of fresh water for boilers and 4 tons for the needs of the crew were consumed daily on the cruiser. If the Emden had lost the Marcomannia, in whose tanks a supply of fresh water was stored, then he would have had a very bad time. True, the cruiser had a desalination plant, but it was necessary to spend 10 tons of coal in order to distill the daily supply of fresh water.

While loading was in progress, the Pontoporos received new instructions. Although the coal in her holds was of rather poor quality, and the ship itself was too slow, Müller did not want to let her go. He needed at least some kind of reserve if anything happened to the Marcomannia, and there was nothing better at hand.

The rendezvous place was assigned to the Greek coal miner, and Chief Petty Officer Mayer and 14 sailors from the Emden were left on board. The Greek captain was promised generous compensation for his troubles and a promise was given that his ship would be released as soon as coal ran out on it.

On September 17, 1914, at about 14:00, the Emden approached the entrance to the North Preparis Strait, where the shipping lanes between Calcutta, Singapore, Madras and Rangoon intersected. There, the Emden cruised until dark, but found no one. In the middle of the night, Muller sent the cruiser to Rangoon, hoping to find new prey there.

From dawn on September 18, the Emden took such a position off Rangoon that no ship could have slipped past her unnoticed. But the sea remained depressingly deserted. It was not until about 4:00 p.m. that smoke began to appear on the far horizon to the right of the bow. Some kind of steamer was going, apparently, from the Strait of Malacca. The steamer went straight to the "Emden", which, saving coal, moved towards the slow speed of 5 knots. Another three hours passed before the ship got close enough to the cruiser to make out her yellow chimney and white superstructures. Lieutenant Lauterbach assumed that the ship was Dutch, but when the ship stopped, it turned out that it was Norwegian, bearing the name "Dover".

Lauterbach climbed aboard. The captain of the Dover, a former officer in the Norwegian Navy, was friendly. He spoke fluent German and offered to take the Mafison Clan crew on board and take them to Rangoon at no charge. But the captain was persuaded to accept \$100. When they began to transport prisoners to the Norwegian steamer, the captain, whose ship was sailing from Penang, meanwhile told Lauterbach a lot of interesting news. First, in the Strait of Malacca, he met an auxiliary cruiser. Secondly, both French armored cruisers, Duplex and Montcalm, well known to the Emden crew, are stationed in Penang itself. Muller, who was contemplating a surprise attack on Penang, did not like this news very much. The captain firmly promised not to enter Rangoon until daylight and to give the Emden an opportunity to make up for lost time.

During the night, the coast radio stations worked non-stop. One of them, located at Diamond Point, reported that artillery fire was heard near Akyab, where, apparently, a German cruiser is located. She was answered by other stations, including the "old friend" of the "Emden", an unknown ship with the call sign "QMD". Some coast station asked, "Who is 'QMD'?" and received an answer in plain text: "QMD is Hampshire." So on "Emden" and suspected.

Other news on the Emden came from newspapers received from the Norwegian captain. It was reported there, in particular, that the Elsbet and Freesia colliers, which were supposed to provide Admiral Spee's squadron with coal, were sunk off the island of Jap. Many articles were devoted to the actions of "Emden" in the Bay of Bengal. Although government reports indicated that the safety of the sea lanes would be guaranteed and the fate of the Emden already sealed, the insurance premiums of the shipping companies crept up ominously.

On September 19, the Emden turned to the westerly course. The sea was again mirrored, providing an excellent opportunity for another "coal festival". Loading of coal began at 7 am and finished at 15:00. Moving away from the collier, "Emden" again lay down on a westerly course, heading for the Strait of South Preparis between the Andaman Islands. The entrance to the strait was reached by 22:00.

The cruiser remained fully operational, since at night the radio signals from the Khemgapir sounded unusually loud, making it clear that the enemy armored cruiser was somewhere in the immediate vicinity - no more than 10 miles away. However, the night passed without any incident. At 1 o'clock in the morning, the Emden had already passed the strait.

and set course for Madras, continuing westward through the pitch darkness of the night.

Müller is up to something special this time. For the first time during the cruise, he decided to shell the city in order to cause chaos and panic among its inhabitants and thereby lower the prestige of the English fleet among the local population. The target was Madras. Muller expected that such an action, demonstrating the complete impotence of the British, would stir up the radical elements in India, if not for an uprising, then at least for some kind of civil action.  
defiance.

The morning of September 22 marked the day the Emden was to receive its baptism of fire. Madras was a fortified city, and no one on the cruiser doubted that the shore batteries would respond to the bombardment of the Emden. The possibility was not ruled out at all that enemy warships were on guard duty under the shore. Müller planned to begin shelling at nightfall, hoping that the Emden would be able to sneak up on the shore undetected. At 17:00 "Marcomannia" was ordered to go south, and then follow to the agreed rendezvous point. On the Emden they hoisted the fourth false tube and moved at low speed through the tropical darkness to the shore. After a while, the lights of a large city appeared on the horizon, and quite unexpectedly, the flashing entrance beacon of the port of Madras opened. It seemed that the local authorities did not know anything at all that the war had begun. Bright city lights made it easier to approach the shore.

The Emden crept closer and closer, surprisingly convinced that none of the navigation and leading lights that help ships enter the port were extinguished. They have long forgotten what war is. The last skirmish off the coast of India occurred between the British and the French back in the 18th century. Well-visible coastal landmarks made it possible to accurately identify bombing targets. They were supposed to be the fuel tanks of the Burma Oil Company and the 150-mm guns of the coastal battery located behind the lighthouse. The last to be destroyed is the beacon at the entrance to the port.

The chances of success were excellent. The panorama of Madras grew, and at 21:45 the cruiser was already directly opposite the city, about 2800-3000 meters from the coast. On the Emden they were ready for all unforeseen surprises, fearing most of all the presence of warships on the raid and the sudden fire of the coastal battery. Finally, Muller gave the command to stop the cars, turning the cruiser with her bow to the south. Then followed the long-awaited order: "Turn on the searchlights! Open fire!"

Blinding supernatural light cut through the darkness, illuminating the target with a pointing finger. And at the same moment the first volley thundered. Long flames erupted from the gun barrels. Like a tropical thunderstorm rumbled through the night, awakening a huge city. The echo of the cannon had not yet faded before a new wave of thunder overwhelmed it, crashing into Madras. "Emden" fired guns on the starboard side. Copper casings of powder charges fell to the deck with a clang. Elevators worked rhythmically, feeding new shells to the guns. Shooting was carried out at the oil tanks, located almost at the very edge of the water. Another volley, and a huge wall of flame rose above the oil storage facilities, burning oil began to spill over the port area. Searchlights were closed on the Emden. The fiery hell raging on the shore perfectly illuminated the whole picture.

Only after the fifth Emden salvo did the coastal battery return fire. Apparently, the British gunners could not correctly determine the distance to the Emden, because of the nine shots fired at the cruiser, only three shells were observed falling on the Emden. Despite such a short distance, one enemy shell fell short of a hundred meters from the ship, and the other two fell with the same overshoot. With rapid fire, the Emden's guns fired 130 rounds when Müller ordered the guns to stand down. The commander did not want to waste any more ammunition, since no one could know where and

when they are needed again. His plan to destroy the oil and panic among the people of Madras was carried out.

As it turned out later, 5,000 tons of precious fuel were destroyed in Madras, and only the wind blowing towards the sea saved the city from a major fire. But the psychological effect of the bombing was enormous. Crowds of people rushed to the railway station, trying to leave the city. The angry crowd, incited by the extremists, rushed to the governor's palace. Their way was blocked by soldiers and policemen. The dump started. The police fired into the crowd. No one believed the official explanations, just as no one believed in the ability of the English fleet to defend the coast of India.

Ominous rumors spread throughout the seaside towns, daily disturbing the inhabitants with the prospect of nighttime bombardments from the sea. The shipping companies refused to send their ships to Indian ports except under the escort of warships. Freight and insurance prices have risen sharply. Never since the sepoy uprising had the vast subcontinent been in such a fever. In all the numerous languages and dialects of India, the unknown name of the foreign ship "Emden" was repeated in different contexts.

(All the light cruisers of the Kaiser fleet were named after German cities. Emden is a small seaside town in northwestern Germany.)

This word, the meaning of which was not clear to anyone, entered the local dialects and has survived to this day, meaning strength, valor, determination and ingenuity in achieving the goal.

Still not suspecting that his ship was becoming legendary, Captain 2nd Rank Muller led the Emden away from Madras. The cruiser was leaving with her navigation lights on, so that all observers on the coast could be sure of the northerly course. Out of sight of Madras, the Emden put out the lights and, dissolving like a ghost in the night, changed course south, hastening to rendezvous with the Marcomannia,

From the night radio interception on the Emden, they realized that they were very lucky. They not only got out safely from the fire of the coastal battery, but also escaped a much greater danger. "Old friend" "Emden" British armored cruiser "Hampshire" was very close to Madras.

"Old friend" is not irony at all. During the Chinese Revolution of 1913, Emden and Hampshire stood side by side in Nanjing and friendly relations developed between their crews. Now the Hampshire was the flagship of the allied detachment leading the search for the Emden.

The commander of the Hampshire, Captain 1st Rank Grant, knowing the mentality of the German sailors well, accurately predicted Muller's next step. He was sure that after the actions at Calcutta, the next victim of the Emden would be the large and open port of Madras. Grant went to Madras to cover the city and catch the Emden, at the same time ordering the Japanese cruiser in his possession to take such a position as to cut off the Emden's escape. It seemed that the fate of the Emden was sealed. However, on the night of September 18-19, the Hampshire received a message from the Diamond Point coast station about artillery fire off Akyab on the coast of Burma. After receiving this news, which was nothing more than the transmission of another rumor, the commander of the Hampshire no longer had a choice - he had to immediately change course and go to Akyab. By the time the error was discovered, it was already too late. The Emden bombarded Madras and left, dissolving into the vast expanses of the night ocean.

As for the Japanese cruiser "Tikuma", he did not comply with the received order at all,

later citing a lack of coal. Thus, "Emden" managed to slip between Scylla and Charybdis, again turning from a game into a hunter.

The echo of the dashing deeds of the Emden reached Berlin, where they fell into the temptation to entrust the lone light cruiser with the global task of tearing India away from the British Empire. The plan was as follows: there was an English concentration camp in the Andaman Islands, where the Hindu revolutionaries who fought for national independence against British colonial rule were imprisoned. It was assumed that the Emden would bombard the island at night, where the camp with prisoners was located, and then, having landed a landing party on the island, they would free them, take them on board and deliver them to India, where they would kindle if not a revolution, then a major anti-English rebellion.

On September 30, 1914, the German Foreign Ministry sent a directive letter to the Naval Headquarters, stating: "Experts recommend sending the light cruiser Emden to the Andaman Islands to free Indian revolutionaries there ... and, if possible, deliver them to India" .

On October 2, 1914, the General Naval Headquarters sent a circular to all naval attachés to contact Emden and give him an order to proceed to the Andaman Islands to release the imprisoned revolutionaries.

The German command throughout the First World War developed plans to crush its opponents through uprisings and revolutions.

German agents managed to ignite a number of similar uprisings in the British and French colonies in Africa, in Northern Ireland and achieved brilliant success, crushing Russia with the October Revolution of 1917. But in this case, the Admiralty for some reason decided not to risk it.

Five days later, on October 7, 1914, the following order was transmitted: "Order No. 87 concerning the Andaman Islands is cancelled. The light cruiser Emden is ordered to act at its own discretion.

V

On September 23, the Emden met at the agreed rendezvous point with the Marcomannia, and both ships turned to the southeast. Muller decided to withdraw from the Bay of Bengal, where his presence was widely known, and move operations to the Ceylon area. On the shipping route between the Red Sea and Colombo, there was something to profit from.

On September 24, the cruiser approached Ceylon, keeping 60-70 miles from the island so as not to be detected. The ether literally bubbled. "Emden" was on everyone's lips.

On the morning of September 25, the cruiser approached the coast of Ceylon and by 11:00 the southern coast of the island appeared on the horizon. The Emden turned west, keeping about 30 miles from the coast.

The ball-colored ship sailing on a smokeless coal could hardly be identified from the shore. It is unlikely that they were especially alarmed here, since they received a notification from Madras that the Emden had left in a northerly direction. Indeed, around 13:00, smoke appeared on the horizon, followed by a steamer. The Emden didn't have to rush to him. The steamer itself went towards the cruiser, apparently considering it to be an English ship. A

what other ship could be so close to Ceylon?

The ship raised the English flag. Emden, in turn, raised the German flag, ordered the ship to stop, and lowered the boat with the prize crew. The ship turned out to be the English bulk carrier King Land, with a displacement of 3,650 tons, sailing in ballast from Suez to Calcutta.

Food was removed from the captured ship: flour, potatoes, fresh meat and canned food. The crew was transferred to the Marcomannia, and the ship was blown up. He quickly sank.

After dark, the cruiser continued to stay 30 miles south of Colombo. Apparently, the bombing of Madras made an impression on the local authorities: four powerful searchlights probed the approaches to the port. The Emden entered the shipping line between Colombo and Minicoy, a port on the west coast of Ceylon, where there was a large lighthouse that identified all ships going from Aden to Colombo.

Around 10:00 pm, Emden's signalmen on the starboard side spotted a steamer, apparently coming from Colombo. The Emden let the steamer go ahead, so that it moved away from the port, and then caught up with it and ordered it to stop. Lieutenants Lauterbach and Prince Hohenzollern landed on board the new victim. The patrol searchlights from Colombo almost reached the place where the ship was hijacked.

The prize turned out to be the English steamer Timerick, heading to the metropolis with a cargo of 4,000 tons of sugar. Muller decided to take the ship behind him and sink it away from Colombo. The ship's crew was ordered to collect personal belongings and get ready to board the boats. But plans had to be changed. The English captain was furious when he realized that he had fallen into the hands of the Germans right under the noses of the English warships guarding the approaches to Ceylon. British naval intelligence assured him that the sea route between Colombo and Aden was perfectly safe, and the captain went to sea a day ahead of schedule. He forbade his subordinates to even lift a finger on the orders of these "damned Germans."

This was the first and last time that the Emden prize team had to face such strong resistance. The usually calm and polite Lauterbach, infuriated by the English captain's remarks about the "damned stinking Germans", announced to the captain that if he did not obey, the ship would be sunk right on the spot. Muller intervened, sending a boat with reinforcements to the Timerick. The rebellious captain and his chief engineer were taken into custody. The crew was given 10 minutes to pack up, forbidden to take with them anything other than wearables. It was a hard blow, since Timerick came from Japan, where many people bought expensive souvenirs.

The sailors were very angry, but not at the Emden, but at their captain, since he alone managed to insure his purchases. When the captain of the Timerick boarded the Emden, not only did he not say hello to anyone, he did not even put out his cigarette. Lieutenant Mücke ordered him to immediately put out his cigarette and behave like a prisoner of war. The captain and his mechanic were locked in a mine cellar.

At that moment, lights appeared from the direction of the Minicoy, and a brightly lit mail steamer appeared. On "Emden" they decided to "not notice" him. Radio operators have already intercepted a message that the Dutch mail steamer Queen Emma is heading to Colombo, requesting a pilot.

Müller patiently waited for the passage of the Dutchman to blow up the Timerick. The sailors of the prize crew, who returned from the Timerick, brought with them several hens and fresh eggs, which it was decided to give to the seriously ill mechanic Stoffers. Not waiting for the blown up "Timerick" to go to the bottom, "Emden" again went west, entering the line between Colombo and Minicoy. Lieutenant Lauterbach brought relatively recent newspapers from the Timerick. In addition to the situation in the world, a detailed schedule was printed in the newspapers

the arrival of steamships in India and the time of their departure from Indian ports. Among other things, the newspapers, of course, wrote about the bombing of Madras, giving details of the panic that had begun in the city and assessing the damage caused.

One of the articles was dedicated to the Emden commander. An English journalist called Captain 2nd Rank Muller an "honest sportsman." And the manufacturer of the soap captured on the Indus placed an advertisement in the newspaper: "Even the sailors of the Emden use our excellent soap."

No sooner had the Emden turned towards Minicoy than it stumbled upon a new victim. The steamer was stopped and the prize crew led by Lauterbach, boarding it, found that it was the British ship Greifvel with a displacement of 4437 tons, going in ballast to Colombo. They decided to transfer prisoners to him and release him.

At about two o'clock in the morning on September 27, another steamer was discovered, going directly across the course of the Emden. The steamer was stopped. No prize has ever been more celebrated than this one. The captured steamer turned out to be the British collier Buree, carrying at least 6,500 tons of first-class Cardiff coal from England to Hong Kong for the needs of the warships of the British Navy. Now Emden could not worry about coal for a very long time.

After such a successful night, there was nothing left but to follow at low speed towards the beautiful dawn rising over the ocean. A light northeast monsoon was blowing, the day promised to be clear, the sea calm. A Sunday service was held on the Emden and the crew was allowed to rest. The rest ended at 13:00, when a new column of smoke was discovered on the horizon, and soon a steamer appeared, going directly to the Emden. It only took a flag signal to discipline the steamer. The new victim was the English bulk carrier Ribera, with a displacement of 3500 tons, sailing in ballast from Aden to Batavia. Part of the provisions were removed from the steamer, the crew was transported and sent to the bottom with explosive charges.

The captain of the Ribera was very talkative, and the ship's log was very informative. On its way, the Ribera met a large military convoy delivering Indian troops from Bombay to the Red Sea. The steamer exchanged signals with both escort ships: the British battleship Swiftshere and the Russian cruiser Askold. The captain also reported that between Suez and Colombo he encountered many other English and French warships. Having sunk Ribera, Emden continued to move towards Minicoy. Muller was thinking that it was time to leave the area altogether, so as not to tease fate, when at about 9 pm another victim literally ran into the cruiser. It turned out to be the English steamer Foyle, with a displacement of 4147 tons, sailing in ballast from Aden to Colombo.

While the prize crew was preparing to send the Foyle to the bottom, the lights of another vessel appeared from the same direction. "Emden" went to meet him. By the lights they determined that this was a mail steamer, and they gave the order to stop by radio. They dreamed of catching a mail steamer on the Emden for a long time, since much more valuables could be found on them - up to gold bullion than on ocean laborers with their cheap cargo. But this time they were disappointed. The ship, whose name was "Diosia", turned out to be neutral - Dutch. Besides, it was empty: no mail, no gold, no passengers. He was allowed to move on.

The time has come to release the Greifvel, on which all the prisoners were transferred, including the captain and mechanic from the Timerick, who are under arrest on the Emden. After waiting for the Greifvel to disappear from view, the Emden headed for the Maldives in order to get out of the danger zone. In addition, the intensified monsoon caught up with a large swell, and it was necessary



find some quiet bay to load the coal. On the way to the Maldives from the Emden, an unusual and incomprehensible natural phenomenon was observed. Suddenly, right along the bow of the cruiser, a patch of water boiling in clouds of steam was found. Then from there, as if being under high pressure, a jet of hot water hit the sky high, falling in a wide arch back into the ocean. This phenomenon could be explained by the fact that some kind of strong undercurrent made its way to the surface of the ocean. But there was no warm current in this place on the maps. "Emden" managed to turn away, passing 50 meters from the boiling jet beating from the surface of the sea. But the less maneuverable Marcomannia landed right under the hot shower.

The whole day of September 29 was spent loading coal. On September 30, Marcomannia loaded the rest of its coal, as well as stocks of oil, fuel oil and fresh water, to Buresk, which was becoming Emden's new cash cow.

Having finished unloading supplies, "Marcomannia" received a new task. She was to, avoiding busy sea routes, meet the Pontoporos at a designated place and take as much coal from her as possible. The Marcomannia was then to take on board the prize crew from the Emden on the Pontoporos, pay the Greek captain the promised compensation, and, as agreed, let him go where he pleased. After that, the Marcomannia was supposed to come to one of the ports of the Dutch East Indies, buy provisions for the Emden there, bunker with fresh water and leave, if possible, unnoticed, then heading for a rendezvous with the Emden. The next meeting was scheduled for early November.

The crew of the Emden poured out onto the upper deck to say goodbye to their faithful comrade, with whom they had worked so well for the past two months. To the cries of farewell and wishes of good luck and happy sailing, the old steamer of the Hamburg-American line, which had become unusually high due to empty holds, slowly turning around, left in an easterly direction.

No one on the Emden could have imagined that they were parting forever. Not wanting to risk it, the Emden steered on a false course until the Marcomannia was out of sight, and then "turned towards the Chagos Archipelago. There Muller wanted to give the crew the necessary rest to recuperate and make urgently needed repairs on the Emden. In addition, the archipelago lay at the crossroads of sea routes between Australia and the Red Sea and between Cape Town and Colombo, so that even there it was possible to pinch the enemy's maritime trade. Mediterranean Sea.

The journey to Diego Garcia, the main port in the Chagos archipelago, took more than a week. The signalmen scanned the horizon for more victims, but the sea was deserted.

The Emden cruised for several days on the Australia-Aden and Cape Town-Calcutta lines, but found no one. On the morning of October 9, the Emden reached Diego Garcia. The harbor in which the Emden and Buresk anchored was closed off by a coral reef, providing a safe anchorage. The island is small and round in shape, overgrown with coconut palms, the fruits and bark of which were the only objects of local export and income. Once every three months, a sailboat came to the island with mail and provisions, leaving this little paradise with a cargo of coconuts and copra.

Immediately after anchoring, the sailors began cleaning the Emden's hull. The ship last docked in June, while still in Qingdao. Since then, the underwater part of the cruiser has been overgrown with shells, significantly reducing the speed. By flooding the side compartments, an artificial roll was created on the Emden, and the sailors cleaned the underwater part of the side

metal scrapers. Of course, it was impossible to get completely to the underwater part of the ship, but cleaning even one square meter had a positive effect on the speed of the ship.

Soon the first guest arrived at the Emden. It turned out to be the assistant director of the island's coconut oil factory. After talking with the commander, the guest was taken to the wardroom, where, not without pleasure, he drank several glasses of whiskey and soda.

It turned out that no one in Diego Garcia knew anything at all about the war - not even the fact that it had begun. The sailboat that comes to the island for coconuts left Diego Garcia for the last time before the start of the war. And he was the island's only connection to the outside world. The assistant director was French. For a long time he mistook the Emden for an English ship and apologized for not speaking English. He realized his mistake in the wardroom when he saw a portrait of the Kaiser there, which they forgot to replace with a portrait of King George, and was terribly surprised to learn that he had landed on a German cruiser.

Since the Frenchman did not know anything, they did not tell him anything, explaining that the cruiser was on a round-the-world training voyage and entered the port to carry out urgent repairs. They have been at sea for so long that they also do not know anything about what is happening in the world. The Frenchman laughed and replied that even if the gentlemen did not know anything, they still knew much more than he did. Following his assistant, the director himself soon appeared on the cruiser, who was escorted directly to Muller.

As a government official, the director, even more than his assistant, yearned to know what had happened in the world over the past few months. Unfortunately, the commander of the Emden replied, he was on the high seas so much that he himself was absolutely nothing

does not know.

It turned out that the director has other problems. The motor on his boat broke down, and, naturally, there was no one on the island who understood at least something about motors. Non-commissioned officer Kluge was sent ashore with the director, who fixed the engine, and on the same day the Emden officers received a letter of gratitude and an invitation to breakfast. Along with the invitation to the Emden, they sent a whole boatload of fresh fruit and a huge live pig. In turn, the Emden's wardroom presented local officials with a case of cognac, whiskey and several boxes of cigars. They did not want to be indebted to the unsuspecting citizens of a hostile country.

After dinner, the Emden weighed anchor and wanted to go aboard the Buresk to load coal, which caused alarm and protests from the English captain of the coal miner. In the Royal Navy, he explained, even a small destroyer was not allowed to come aboard a merchant ship. If there is a need to receive coal at sea, then the coal miner himself approaches the side of the warship. That's the rule.

Müller wanted to allow the team to swim in the lagoon, but this idea had to be abandoned: huge rays, taken at first for dirty bags thrown into the water, plowed the surface of the bay in all directions. Sometimes they jumped out of the water, gleaming in the sun with the silvery color of their scales and flapping their fins like wings. They fired at them from rifles and it seems that they hit one, but they failed to pull him onto the ship. But they caught plenty of fish. In the bay it was visible, invisible - absolutely incredible rocks and shapes, all the colors of the rainbow.

Fishing lines stretched out of each porthole, not having time to pull out prey. The fish were pink, green, blue, brown, white and black. They were fat, flat, wide and serpentine, with large eyes and no eyes at all, with huge teeth and toothless. The ship's doctor carefully examined the fish, rejecting those whom he considered

poisonous. There were also eels in the lagoon, but not a single one was caught. Sometimes they jumped out of the water almost two meters high, straightened up to their full length, and fell back into the water. Loading of coal was postponed for the night, taking only 450 tons.

On the morning of October 10, having finished loading coal, the Emden left Diego Garcia, not wanting to tempt fate any longer. Coming in wartime to a port owned by the enemy and loading coal there was an adventure unprecedented in history, which, fortunately, ended well. Emden left on a northwesterly course, and when the island sank below the horizon, lay to the northeast. For some time, the Emden cruised east of the Chagos Archipelago, along the sea route between Australia and Aden, hoping to intercept some random steamer. But no one got caught.

Meanwhile, radio operators intercepted a message from Colombo responding to a request from merchant ships whether the route between Aden and Colombo was safe. The answer was positive. In other words, the British knew that the Emden was no longer in the area. Müller planned to head from here to Penang, but decided to postpone it and hunt again at Minicoy.

On the Emden they did not yet know how lucky they were that they managed to get out of Diego Garcia in time. Analyzing the possible actions of the Emden after the sinking of the last victim, the commander of the English cruiser Hampshire, Captain 1st Rank Grant, decided to conduct a search in the area of the Maldives. Then the instinct of the hunter led Grant to Diego Garcia. But by the time the Hampshire, escorted by the auxiliary cruiser Empress of Russia, arrived at the coconut port, the Emden had already slipped away.

The administrators of the oil refinery were stunned to find out who they were hosting on the island as guests of honor. They readily informed Grant of the course by which the Emden had left the island, although Grant was well aware that this course was false. Now the hunt for the Emden had to start all over again.

Before the German raider was a thousand roads in the boundless expanse of the Indian Ocean.

## VI

October 15 "Emden" approached the atoll of Miladu Madu - the northernmost of the Maldives, where he decided to take coal. Having loaded 280 tons, the cruiser continued its journey north, heading towards Minicoy.

At 22:30, a navigation buoy opened fire right on the course, and after another half an hour, the Emden returned to the area from which it left two weeks ago with rich booty. The fox was back in the chicken coop. At 23:00, lights appeared from the sea, and the Emden went at full speed to cut the new victim. Having approached, the steamer was ordered to stop through a megaphone. It turned out to be the Clan Grant, a Scottish bulk carrier with a displacement of 3948 tons, which was sailing with general cargo from England to Colombo and other ports of India. There were a lot of provisions and cigarettes on the ship. Muller decided to reload food on the Emden, but for now he ordered the steamer to follow the cruiser, heading at low speed towards Colombo.

On the night of October 16, the Emden turned back on its course and at dawn again went abeam Minicoy, keeping out of sight of the coast. At 7 am, they began to reload food from the captured ship. In addition, some spare parts for steam engines and several hundred refractory bricks for boilers were removed from it.

The upper deck of the cruiser again began to resemble a rich rural fair. The work was in full swing when a column of thick smoke appeared from the direction of Aden. Ordering to suspend work, Muller led the cruiser towards a new victim. Soon, the masts swaying wildly over the horizon appeared, which is usually the case with destroyers when moving at full speed on the ocean swell. Muller ordered to break through the combat alarm, trying for the time being to stay away from the ship going towards him. To the great surprise of everyone on the Emden, it turned out to be a dredge, which was least expected to meet in the middle of the ocean. The earthman was talking terribly. Having signaled to the scoop "Follow me", "Emden" returned to the unloaded "Clan Grant". When Lieutenant Lauterbach and his men clambered with difficulty onto the rocking deck of the dredge, they were, to their amazement, greeted with loud laughter from the captain and all the crew.

It turned out that this scoop, whose name was "Ponrabbela", hobbled a four-knot course from England to Tasmania to replace the previous" scoop, which sank somewhere along the way. The captain and crew, who received a good advance before leaving, were glad that "force majeure circumstances" interrupted their difficult and dangerous journey in the middle of the journey. Tears of joy streamed down the weather-beaten cheeks of the captain when he exclaimed: "Thank God I got my 500 pounds in advance and did not drown along the way with this wreck."

The excavator, having removed the jubilant crew from it, was drowned by artillery. To Müller's astonishment, it took three shells to fire before the scoop smoothly turned keel up and floated in this position for a long time, as if teasing Müller, who was sorry to waste another shell on her. "Ponrabbela", resembling a whale, sailed like this for about an hour, and then, as if coming to her senses, she quickly sank to the bottom. Then, in the same way, they shot the Clan Grant, which quickly capsized and sank. The live ducks that were on it were released from the cages, and in a cheerful flock, flapping their wings on the water, they swam in their native element around the dying ship.

The Emden turned east, and at 11:00 p.m., signalmen found new lights coming straight at them. The new prey was the English steamship Benmore with a displacement of 4806 tons. The ship was completely new - built in 1912 and belonged to the Thomsen shipping company. It went to the Far East, having a very valuable cargo in its holds: spare parts for steam engines, cars, motorcycles, motor boats and boats. The crew was removed from the ship, and soon it was blown up. The heavy load quickly dragged the Benmore to the bottom. And the Emden continued to cruise at low speed west of Minicoy. October 17 passed without any events, and the next day the Emden moved to a position north of Minicoy.

Horns and boatswain's pipes greeted the sunrise. Sunday morning was excellent, the sea was completely calm. After the traditional Sunday service, smoke was immediately noticed on the horizon from the starboard side. Then a full-bodied gray chimney appeared above the horizon, gradually turning blue as it approached. It was rich booty.

Steamboats of the Liverpool line. The Blue Fannel (Blue Trumpet) were well known. It turned out that the brand new English steamship Troilus with a displacement of 7562 tons, just off the slipway, was sailing from Colombo to England with an excellent cargo of copper, rubber and zinc with a total value of 25 million marks.

There were also several passengers on the ship, including one woman. This woman stunned Lieutenant Lauterbach when, in a cheerful greeting, she called the commander of the prize team by name. It turns out that before the war she was a passenger on the Hamburg-American line liner, commanded by Lauterbach, who was then in reserve, and she remembered him well. It seemed that she even enjoyed such a romantic adventure,

as its capture by "pirates" on the high seas. The woman walked around the deck handing out cigarettes and chocolates to the astonished "pirates". It turned out that the sudden appearance of "Emden" was not at all a surprise to her.

The lady traveled from Hong Kong to Europe. The steamer on which she left Hong Kong soon returned, as information was received that the Emden was waiting for him on the way. There she waited for several weeks, constantly receiving information from the shipping company that the Emden was sitting in ambush at the very entrance to the port.

Then she managed to get to Singapore, but again the ghost of the Emden forced the ship to turn back. After waiting a few weeks in Singapore, the lady reached Colombo. She left Colombo on the Troilus, which immediately ran into the Emden. The woman held out her hands to the cruiser and shouted joyfully: "I knew that I would meet you, my Emden!"

She was ready to return to India again "with all this dirty crowd of ragamuffins."

"This is a real lady," the sailors of the Emden decided.

But the captain of the Troilus did not at all share the enthusiasm of "this psychopath", as he put it. On the contrary, he was furious. Before leaving Colombo, a British Naval Intelligence officer advised him to take 30 miles north of his usual route, and he fell right into the clutches of the Emden. This was very interesting information - British intelligence sent their merchant ships directly to the Emden, and Muller, in order not to waste time, ordered the Troilus to keep the Emden from the port side, which was now heading east, entering a new line between Aden and Colombo. At about 21:00, lights were seen to the left of the bow, and the Emden went to them. This time, the English steamer St. Egbert, 5596 tons, which was sailing with a cargo of sugar from Colombo to New York, fell into the hands of the "corsairs". Unfortunately, the cargo was American, ie. neutral. Müller, pondering what to do with this ship, ordered him to stay near him for the time being. Meanwhile, someone's lights appeared in the sea again. After the usual procedure for stopping and inspecting the vessel, it turned out that it was an English collier "Exford", built in 1911 and owned by Tatin from Cardiff.

In its holds were 6,500 tons of excellent Cardiff coal. This was already the second collier chartered by the English Admiralty for the needs of its fleet, which was captured by the Emden. Now the cruiser could not worry about coal for at least a whole year! The only bad thing was that the Exford had no radio.

The morning of October 19 found the Emden standing idle among the captured ships, which again made up a very impressive squadron. Almost all of the cruiser's officers were in prize teams, and only the navigator, senior artilleryman and miner remained at Muller's location, not counting two not very experienced junior lieutenants.

And at that moment, another victim appeared from Aden. This time the prize team had to be formed from one junior lieutenant and three sailors. The new prize was the English ship "Chilkana" with a displacement of 5220 tons. The ship was built in 1910 and belonged to the Indo-British Shipping Company in London. It already seemed that the Emden was in some small port, and the usual port life and bustle were in full swing around.

The steamers were unloading, boats and boats with people and cargo were scurrying around. The captain of the Chilkana left the ship with tears in his eyes, and the crew, which consisted entirely of Chinese, on the contrary, with joyful smiles, since they had been paid for the flight in advance. Muller immediately hired the Chinese again and sent them as stokers to Buresk and Exford, promising a generous advance.

The captured crews of Clan Grant, Ponrabbela and Benmore, who were still on the Bureska, were transferred to the St. Egbert, which immediately began to resemble a refugee evacuation ship. Meanwhile, the Emden fired several rounds at the Troilus. The ship tipped to port, but refused to sink for a long time. Meanwhile, the sailors of the cruiser dismantled the radio station on the Chilkan and transferred it to the Exford.

As Emden's main coal miner, the Exford had to have a stable connection with his patron. All this work attracted the attention of several huge sharks, who darted between the ships, hoping to profit from this hustle and bustle. They were driven off with rifle shots. Sharks were accompanied by a whole flock of blue and white pilots. Lieutenant Hyde managed to shoot one of them from the bridge of the Emden, and then by accident. In the heat of the hunt, the officer dropped his pith helmet overboard. The shark immediately bit him and received a bullet in the head. Slowly turning her belly up, she went to the bottom, escorted by faithful pilots. And "Emden" continued from time to time to shoot at the Troilus, which did not want to sink. 6 shells had already been fired at the ship, and it was still floating on the water.

It was 15:00. Muller ordered the opening of the kingstones on the Chilkan, and the steamer quickly sank. At the same time, St. Egbert, filled with prisoners, received permission to proceed to one of the Indian ports, except for Bombay and Colombo.

The captain was warned that if he was intercepted on the way to these ports, he would be sunk immediately. Muller wanted the captain to get the impression that the Emden was going to continue operating in the Colombo or Bombay area.

At 18:15 Troilus, having received the 12th shell, finally capsized and sank. At nightfall, the Emden, escorted by the captured steamers, turned south. It started raining at night. On the Emden they always looked forward to this event, carefully watching the clouds. As soon as the downpour began, the command was given on the cruiser: "All naked upstairs! Under the shower!"

Fresh water had to be saved, and a tropical downpour gave everyone the opportunity to wash themselves from the heart. Five kittens born on the Emden have already grown up. To distinguish them from each other, each was given a collar of a different color and each was given a name. The names for the kittens were the names of captured steamships. Therefore, cheerful and fluffy kids ran and frolicked around the deck: Pontoporos, Hindu, Kabinga and King Lad. They wanted to call the fifth kitten Diplomat, but this name obviously did not suit him. With a small body, he had long thin legs and a huge head with impressive ears and large eyes. They named him Little Idiot.

Off duty officers and sailors kept an eye on the eternally playing kittens not to fall overboard. They were called so: "cat watch". One day the Little Idiot disappeared. The Cat Watch swore he hadn't gone overboard, but they weren't particularly believed. Sadness gripped the sailors. To everyone's joy, during the evening inspection, the Little Idiot was found peacefully sleeping in a box of 105-mm shells. He made his way there through the shell shaft and, apparently, slightly injured his hind leg, as he limped for several days.

Cats were not the only animals living on the cruiser. On the tank in a special cage lived two constantly grunting pigs, and next to them - several sheep and rams. Further in the stern lived a whole flock of pigeons, usually sitting on rails and flying in fright to one of the chimneys. Several orphan chickens, whose mother was accidentally washed overboard, also ran around the deck. The queen of the entire ship's menagerie was a miniature antelope, which the first officer Myuke discovered on the Clan Grant and brought to the cruiser.

In addition to games with animals, sailor concerts were held almost daily on the Emden.

ensemble singing songs with guitar and accordion.

## VII

October 20, 1914 "Emden" was on a southerly course in the Indian Ocean, giving the crew a complete rest, as far as is generally possible on a warship in a combat situation.

Captain 2nd Rank Muller planned to make a surprise attack on Penang, where he expected to catch by surprise and destroy enemy warships. Muller was already tired of drowning merchants; by the time the cruiser left Qingdao, 22 ships with a total displacement of more than 100 thousand tons had already been captured and destroyed.

In the eyes of the world press, the "White Swan of the East", as "Emden" was called before the war, turned into the "Black Wolf", as bloodthirsty as it was cowardly, as he constantly moved away from a whole pack of "hunting dogs" that scoured the ocean for his capture and destruction.

Muller decided to prove that the destruction of merchant ships is far from all that his Emden is capable of. Smoke appeared again on the horizon, but Muller, deciding not to be distracted from the main task, let him go.

The cruiser continued on a southerly course, skirting Ceylon. At night, a tropical downpour again poured down, making visibility zero to the great joy of the crew, who once again washed themselves, and Muller himself, since the downpour hid the cruiser from outsiders eye.

On October 21, at about 14:00, Muller ordered the Exford to leave with a subsequent meeting at the agreed place, and he himself, accompanied by one Bureska, went further. Having slipped through the sea route between Colombo and Singapore, the Emden turned east into the southern part of the Bay of Bengal.

On the Emden's bridge, everyone was languishing from the unbearable heat and stuffiness. It was even worse in the chart house, but Karl Muller, dressed as always in his impeccably clean and buttoned white tunic, sat there for hours, burrowing headlong into maps, sailing directions and navigational instructions.

The officers believed that their commander was planning another hunt for merchant steamers. No one suspected that Mueller was contemplating a plan to strike Penang. The approaches to Penang Island were dangerously shallow.

The island on which the port of Georgetown was located was separated from the Malay Peninsula by a narrow strait, which could be penetrated from the north or from the south: For the Emden, the only possible passage was the north one, but it was very dangerous to enter it, especially at night. If there were any French cruiser or even a destroyer, the Emden would have to take the fight, driving itself into the neck of a bottle. But if successful, if in Penang it was possible to destroy some Allied warship in addition to the merchant ships stationed there, then the effect of this operation could be even greater than during the bombardment of Madras. This would temporarily interrupt all maritime trade through Singapore and deal another blow to British prestige.

There was anxiety on the ship. Knowing nothing about the plans of his commander,

the cruiser's officers and sailors noticed that Muller had already allowed several merchantmen to pass by. So he's preparing some kind of special operation.

October 22 was the birthday of the German Empress. "Emden" was decorated with banners and pennants. At 10:00 there was a solemn formation on the deck - officers and sailors for the first time put on full dress uniform with orders. Everything looked like in peacetime. Müller addressed the crew with a brief speech about the love of the Empress "for the people and the Fatherland." The sailors shouted three times "Hurrah!", the orchestra played "Guard on the Rhine", and "Emden" fired a salute in 21 volleys. That was the statute.

On October 26, at about one in the morning, from the Emden they saw the outlines of the Nicobar Islands in the distance. Under their cover, Müller decided to replenish his coal reserves. The work that began at 7 am was completed by 4 pm, after which Buresk was released. The collier was ordered to proceed to the agreed meeting place, where to wait for the Emden as long as supplies of provisions and fresh water would allow, and then, if the Emden did not appear during this time, to leave for one of the neutral ports.

At 18:00 Emden weighed anchor and headed for Penang, following at a speed of 12 knots. Soon the cruiser crossed the sea route between Calcutta and Singapore. Now even the fattest transport could not force the Emden to stop or change course.

On the night of October 27, Müller ordered the speed to be increased to 17 knots. In the morning, as before the bombing of Madras, the commander of the Emden gathered the officers in his cabin, dedicating them to the plan of the operation he had conceived and giving each of them the appropriate instructions.

The ship prepared for battle. People washed and put on clean uniforms. At 17:00, the long-awaited command sounded: "Everyone, gather in the poop!"

Already by the faces of their officers, the assembled sailors realized that they were about to hear something unusual. Then the commander spoke. Briefly describing his plans, he noted that their implementation depends entirely on the courage and skill of the sailors. The sailors listened to the calm and clear words of their commander, not at all doubting the success of the plan.

plan.

But it became clear to everyone that the operation in Penang would have nothing to do with that one; which was carried out at Madras. There Emden "bombarded the port, being actually on the high seas and having the opportunity to dissolve again in the ocean at any moment. In Penang, he had to act in narrowness, as if inside a pipe, where there was no freedom of maneuver and one could easily be blocked. Moreover, it was clear to everyone that the insignificant 105-mm guns of the Emden were not capable of inflicting quick stunning damage even on enemy warships taken by surprise, and therefore all hope was on torpedoes. who they were and how many of them, no one knew) at a distance of an effective torpedo salvo.

During the night of October 28, the Emden adjusted its speed in such a way as to appear in Penang at dawn. All the cruiser's boilers were under steam, the guns and rangefinders were checked, and the fourth false tube was again installed on the upper deck. At 2 o'clock in the morning, the white lights of the entrance beacon of Penang opened right on the bow. The crew was served a festive breakfast, which consisted of milk soup, especially loved by the sailors.

The wise first mate Myuke argued that a sailor fights best after a tasty and satisfying meal. Soon came a very crucial moment of following the northern strait leading to Penang. The southern one was too shallow for the Emden.

The watch was taken by Lieutenant Lauterbach, who, when he was a captain in the merchant fleet, often came to Penang, guiding ships in this way. Everyone on the Emden was again surprised by that



the fact that although the third month of the war was coming to an end, all the beacons, entrance and leading lights of Penang shone as in peacetime.

A strong fair current urged the cruiser ahead of her carefully calculated schedule for her arrival in port. Noticing a steamer following him, Müller slowed down, allowing the unknown ship to arrive at the port ahead of him. Passing ahead of the steamer following him, the Emden increased its speed to 18 knots and went straight into the fire of the entrance buoys separating the outer and inner roadsteads of Penang.

The keen eyes of the signalers looked attentively through the predawn twilight, from which at any moment some destroyer guard, or even someone more terrible, could jump out. There were several islands inside the port, and any ambush could lurk in their shadow. But so far, nothing has happened, except for a few loaded junks and fishing boats leaving the port.

Having bypassed one of the islands, from the Emden they found a rowboat twenty meters to starboard, clearly belonging to the port's pilot service. It was obvious that the Emden was not identified as an enemy ship from the longboat, but they would like to know why the cruiser enters Penang's inner harbor at such a high speed.

The Emden sailed completely blacked out, without a flag and with a fourth false chimney, which made her look like the British Yarmouth-class cruisers. The Emden stopped right at the entrance buoy, turning slightly to the right. In front of him was a panorama of the inland port, brightly lit like a railway station on a national holiday. It was 04:50. Reducing speed, "Emden" passed the entrance buoys.

All binoculars greedily searched the place of the harbor where the parking of warships was indicated on the maps.

Who is there? Are the armored cruisers Duplex and Montcalm here?

The kaleidoscopic effect of many bright lights made it impossible to make out anything properly, except for a fantastic web of chimneys and masts. Having become accustomed to the situation, the signalmen of the "Emden" made out the dark massive silhouettes of warships, carelessly sleeping at anchors with their lights on. It was difficult to identify them. Approaching 1200 meters, from the Emden, against the background of the lights, they saw the silhouette of a large warship with a high mast between the second and third chimneys.

Approaching 800 meters, the Russian light cruiser Zhemchug was identified in this ship. There were no signs of life on it.

The ship slept peacefully. Even his watch, apparently, did not recognize the German cruiser in the Emden.

The dark silhouette of the Russian cruiser, clearly projected against the background of fixed lights, was an ideal target for the Emden's torpedo tubes.

At 05:18, Captain 2nd Rank Muller ordered to open fire. The mine officer, Lieutenant Witgeft, pulled the trigger of the torpedo tube towards himself. And then the guns of the German cruiser hit with a side salvo, and the German flag hoisted on the mast.

It took 11 seconds for the torpedo to travel the distance to the sleepy Russian cruiser and hit it on board behind the last pipe. A large column of water and fire rose above the Zhemchug, the stern of the Russian cruiser was thrown up, and then she quickly settled into the water almost to the stern flagpole. Meanwhile, the shells of the Emden's five onboard guns tore at the bow of the Zhemchug, where the cockpits of the Russian sailors were located.

The sound of cannon volleys echoed like thunder through the narrow waters of the port. The bow and stern parts of the Russian cruiser were engulfed in flames, the bow superstructure was destroyed, and the surviving sailors rushed about the deck in a panic.

Müller turned sharply to the left, approaching the merchant ships, mostly English and Japanese, that were stationed in another part of the harbor.

As the Emden turned around, several shells whistled over it. The surviving sailors of the "Pearl" got to the guns, and opened fire on the "Emden". Their 120-mm shells, flying over the Emden, burst among merchant ships, damaging them.

Then the shooting began from the other side, where the French advice "d'Iberville" and two destroyers were stationed at the lighted pier. Their shells also flew towards merchant ships and even hit one English steamer.

Carefully maneuvering among merchant ships with the help of a rudder and cars, the Emden turned back on its course, continuing to fire at the flaming Zhemchug. The Russian ship had to be destroyed before she herself could use her torpedo tubes.

When the Emden completed its turn, another torpedo was fired from its port side torpedo tube at the Zhemchug.

Seconds were counted on the Emden: one... two... three...

At 05:28, the thunder of the torpedo explosion, blocking the roar of the guns, shot up another column of water, fire and smoke over the Pearl. The second torpedo hit the Zhemchug's side right under the destroyed bow superstructure: Debris flew into the air above the masts, and clouds of yellow-black smoke enveloped the ship. The Russian cruiser broke in half.

When, after two minutes, the smoke dissipated a little, in the place where the "Pearl" stood, the upper topmast of its mast was lonely sticking out of the water. Less than 10 minutes passed between the release of the first and second torpedoes.

One enemy was finished. Now other warships in the port were clearly visible from the Emden. Now it was up to them to do it.

The Emden turned to starboard to quickly destroy the d'Iberville and as many merchant ships as possible.

The last task was very difficult, since Muller wanted to be completely sure of the nationality of these ships. But at that moment, from the side of the outer roadstead, another French warship appeared in the harbor, half obscured by puffs of its own smoke.

His appearance saved the d'Iberville and two more unidentified French destroyers (Fronde and Pistol), because, seeing that the new enemy was cutting off his exit from the port, Muller immediately forgot about them and sent the Emden to the new enemy .

From the bridge of the cruiser, the new ship was identified as a destroyer, and Muller was even ready to ram it to escape from the mousetrap. From a distance of about 6000 meters "Emden" opened fire. The first shells fell by, because due to strong refraction, optical instruments incorrectly determined the distance. The unknown ship turned sharply to the right and went towards the shore, making it possible to accurately identify itself. It turned out to be the governor's yacht. The Emden immediately ceased fire, although one shell did hit the yacht's funnel, fortunately without killing or injuring anyone.

However, when all this became clear, the Emden had already left the inner harbor, where it was too risky to return again. Though reluctantly, Müller forced himself to forget about the d'Iberville and the transports in port.

Having left the port without any interference, Muller ordered the topmast flags to be lowered and the crew to be assembled on the quarterdeck. There, Lieutenant Mücke explained to the sailors that they were fighting with the Russian light cruiser Zhemchug, which was equal to the Emden in terms of tonnage, speed and torpedo armament, but surpassed it in the main caliber of artillery. On the "Pearls" were 120-mm guns, and not 105-mm, as on the "Emden". It was the first battle of cruisers in history, Mücke stressed, when one of them was sunk by torpedoes.

The sailors had not yet had time to cool down from the heat of battle, as the signals of combat alarms sounded again on the Emden. The signalmen spotted another ship approaching from the north.

This time, despite all the refractions and optical illusions, there was no doubt that it was a warship. Apparently, he was on guard duty at the northern entrance to the strait and received a radio call for help. "Emden" went to rapprochement with a new enemy, and from a distance of about 7000 meters it became clear to everyone on the bridge of the German cruiser that they were facing a destroyer. He went to the "Emden" on the bearing 3-4 degrees from the starboard side, raising the tricolor French flag. Did he mistook the Emden for the English cruiser Yarmouth, thanks to a false tube?

The flags were raised again. "Emden" turned to the left and from a distance of 4300 meters opened fire from 105-mm guns on the left side.

At this point, the French destroyer made a mistake. Instead of trying to get out in a torpedo attack, he turned sharply to the left, heading for the coast. This decided his fate, since this maneuver took the precious time needed for the Emden to zero in. With the third salvo, the Emden covered the French destroyer, turning it into a pile of warped and burning metal. Boilers exploded on it, and a huge cloud of steam rose high into the sky.

The distance between ships has decreased. The burning Frenchman swayed without a move on the waves, but his valiant sailors fired at the Emden from the stern gun, but, fortunately, did not achieve hits. They even managed to launch a torpedo at the Emden, which also passed by. And Emden's salvos continued to tear the destroyer to pieces.

It soon disappeared completely in a puff of smoke and steam, and after the tenth salvo, Muller ordered a ceasefire, expecting the destroyer to raise a white flag.

The pipes and masts on it were knocked down, the bridge was completely destroyed, but the white flag was nowhere to be seen, and care had to be taken, i.e. not to get especially close, since the destroyer's torpedo tubes could still work.

The Emden couldn't risk any damage without a base where it could repair it. For the cruiser, this would mean the end of his combat activities. And Muller ordered another volley to be fired at the destroyer. After that, the French ship began to go headlong into the water, lifting up the stern, and soon disappeared from the surface of the sea. Coming close to the place of death of the destroyer prevented another danger.

During the battle, the Emden left the fairway and could run aground at any moment. Having lowered the topmast flags, the cruiser began to reverse away from the place of the death of the destroyer, lowering the boats on the move to pick up the survivors.

When the boats from the Emden approached the place of death, the French sailors desperately tried to sail to the side so as not to be captured. Anti-German propaganda had such an effect

on them that they did not doubt their own death in the event of falling into the hands of the Germans. Of the 76 crew members of the Emden destroyer, 36 were picked up, including one officer. 12 of them were wounded, one seriously.

From a survey of the rescued, it turned out that the enemy of the Emden was the French destroyer Musket with a displacement of 310 tons. It was built in 1902 and armed with one 65 mm and six 47 mm guns and two torpedo tubes. The "Musket" carried out guard duty at the northern entrance to the strait, standing under the shore. French sailors said that they saw the Emden sailing through the strait, but because of the fourth "pipe" they mistook it for the English cruiser Yarmouth. Hearing gunfire in port, they weighed anchor, hoping to intercept the Emden on their return and torpedo them. They also said that the blast from the very first Emden salvo threw almost half of their crew overboard. Others themselves began to rush into the water, fleeing from a hail of shells. Their commander, Lieutenant Theroinn, had his legs broken, but he remained on the bridge to the end. Then the valiant officer tied himself to the railing of the bridge and went to the bottom with his ship.

It was time for Emden to disappear quickly. The Penang radio station had already informed the whole world about the daring raid by the German cruiser, and there was no doubt that the enemy was organizing a pursuit. Indeed, soon another French destroyer appeared behind the Emden's stern. Keeping a respectful distance, he constantly broadcast data on the location and course of the Emden, pointing large ships at it. (This was the French destroyer Fronde, which, at the time of the Emden's appearance in Penang, was idle and was not destroyed only by a lucky chance.)

The Emden increased her speed to 22 knots and took a north-westerly course to deceive the Fronde and the signal station at the northern exit of the strait. Time passed, but it was not possible to get rid of the pursuer - the French destroyer had the same speed as the Emden. Müller could only hope that other enemy ships would not have time to join the Fronde in time, and the Fronde itself, with its insignificant coal reserves, would not last long on the tail of the Emden.

The problem, however, was resolved much faster than expected. The heavens, which constantly patronized the Emden, intervened this time too, sending down another portion of a tropical downpour to the earth, under the cover of which the German cruiser disappeared again. A few hours later, when the clouds cleared and the sun reappeared, the Emden was already alone on the high seas. The pursuer is gone. Emden slowed down to 17 knots. Muller intended to go to the sea route between Rangoon and Penang in order to find some kind of steamer there in order to transfer prisoners to it, first of all, the wounded.

The suffering of the wounded French reminded the German sailors of the realities of war. Most had shrapnel wounds, and a few anamite stokers were badly burned.

Until 16:00, Emden cruised along the Singapore-Rangoon line, but did not meet anyone. The next day, as planned by Muller, the Emden entered the St. George Strait between the Nicobar Islands and passed it safely at 22:00.

Now the Germans could consider themselves more or less safe. Muller allowed the left vehicle to stop, which needed minor repairs, and the cruiser, moving at low speed, turned to the southwest, and then to the west.

Having made one of the most daring raids on the enemy base, which local newspapers would soon call "the most incredible naval adventure", the Emden disappeared again without a scratch.

## VIII

During the night of October 29, two wounded French prisoners died. They were buried with full military honors at sea. The tropical heat made it impossible to linger. The crew of the Emden was lined up on deck in dress uniform.

The prisoners were gathered at the starboard gangway, where the two dead lay, sewn up in canvas and covered with the tricolor of the French Republic. A guard of honor was called to the upper deck, the cruiser's cars were stopped.

Captain 2nd Rank Müller delivered a short speech, first in German and then in French. He recalled how valiant the two dead were who gave their lives for their country.

After a common prayer and a three-time rifle salute, the bodies of the dead were committed to the sea. On the night of October 30, another French prisoner died. He was also buried at sea with full military honors.

Müller understood that the conditions at the Emden were such that in the end all the seriously wounded would die. At 04:00, finally, the long-awaited smoke was found on the horizon, and the cruiser changed course, heading towards it. The beautiful white steamer that appeared after the smoke was stopped. The vessel turned out to be English under the name "Newborn" with a displacement of 3000 tons, en route with a cargo of salt from England to Singapore. The steamer had no more than 12 hours to reach the Dutch port of Sabang, where there was a first-class hospital. The captain, who, at the sight of the Emden, had already mentally said goodbye to his ship, almost died of happiness when he learned that he was being released with French captive sailors.

Before being sent from all prisoners, they took a subscription not to participate in hostilities against Germany in this war. On behalf of the rescued, the surviving officer from the Musket thanked Müller for the humane treatment of prisoners aboard the Emden.

When the English steamer set sail, the French sailors, gathered on her upper deck, waved their hands goodbye to the Emden. The German cruiser took a westerly course and, waiting until the Newborn was out of sight, turned south, heading for a rendezvous with the Buresk forty miles west of the northwestern tip of Simoili Island.

On October 31, at 03:00, observers in the "crow's nest" on the mast of the "Emden" saw the "Buresk".

The collier, following the instructions received, remained in the indicated square all this time and could become an easy prey for any enemy warship. But luck was still on the Emden's side.

On Sunday, November 2, the Emden continued on a southeasterly course. At the festive formation, Muller, using his authority as the commander of a ship on a separate voyage, awarded 40 sailors with the medal "For Valor in Battle." Then, taking advantage of the good weather, the cruiser approached the Buresk and replenished its coal reserves. Around noon, a sailing whaleboat appeared from the side of Padang, sailing due to complete calm under a gasoline engine. Describing a wide circulation around the cruiser, the whaleboat, raising the Dutch flag, approached the gangway of the port side of the Emden, filling the ship's wardroom with gasoline vapors. A figure in khaki uniform emerged from the whaleboat and, going up on the deck of the Emden, introduced himself to the officer of the watch as a captain of the Dutch colonial army, who was a representative of the local authorities. He was escorted directly to Muller. There, a Dutch officer stated that he had come solely to make sure that the Emden was taking coal outside the three-mile zone of the Dutch

territorial waters. Müller assured the colonial captain that this was not the case, and treated whiskey.

The whiskey quickly loosened the Dutchman's tongue. He said that yesterday Portugal declared war on Germany, which, however, did not bother Muller much. The Emden and Buresk drifted slowly into Dutch territorial waters, taking coal, but thanks to the whiskey, everything went off without international incidents.

At 3 pm the Dutchman left the cruiser in the best of spirits, wishing the Emden a happy voyage. Two hours later, having finished loading the coal, the Emden headed west. When the Dutch island disappeared below the horizon, the cruiser turned southeast, heading for the Sound between Java and Sumatra. Near this strait, Muller expected to start a new trapping of merchant ships. I really wanted to capture several Japanese transports in retaliation for the merciless bombardment of Tsingtao by Japanese battleships.

For two days, the Emden cruised in the area of the Sound Strait, but could not find anyone. Then the cruiser went to the appointed rendezvous point with the Exford, but the collier was not there. It's Sunday 8th November. A traditional Sunday service was held on the cruiser. On the light cruisers of the German fleet, a pastor was not supposed to be staffed, and the Protestant worship service was to be conducted by the senior Protestant officer, i.e. the commander of the cruiser himself, captain of the 2nd rank Muller. On Sundays, after the morning inspection, the boatswain's pipes called the Protestant sailors to the quarters for church services. The ship's orchestra played church hymns, then a passage from the Bible was read aloud, Muller delivered a sermon, and at the end everyone sang a prayer to the Creator in unison. At the same time, a Catholic Mass was held on the forecastle, held by the senior of the Catholic officers - Second Lieutenant Gerard and Prince Hohenzollern, when Gerard was on duty. Catholics read the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel, sang litanies and received Holy Communion. Müller insisted that church services on the cruiser be held regularly with all possible ceremonial. This, according to the commander, gave the sailors the necessary relaxation in the course of almost continuous tension and hard work.

After the end of the service, the Exford appeared on the horizon. His lateness to the rendezvous was due to the fact that in the fever of coal loading on the Emden and the coal miners they forgot to synchronize the chronometers. It was a mistake, which, in principle, became fatal for Emden. Lieutenant Gropius returned from the Exford to the Emden, and Lieutenant Lauterbach took command of the coal miner. Chronometers were synchronized on all three ships. Lieutenant Lauterbach received a new rendezvous location off Socotra Island on the opposite side of the Indian Ocean.

Muller decided to completely change the area of Emden's future operations. The sailors of the Emden saw off the coal miner leaving the horizon, not thinking that they were seeing him for the last time.

Merchant ships did not appear, as if someone had swept them from the surface of the ocean, and Muller decided to pay a visit to the Cocos Islands, where he intended to destroy the cable substation and radio station on Directorate Island. With this action, Muller hoped to initiate a panic in Australia, which would have remained without a cable connection with the Metropolis, and also to create a false impression of his withdrawal to the Pacific Ocean. This, according to Muller, would create for some time an element of surprise when the Emden appeared at the exit from the Red Sea, where he intended to go to continue the cruising war against allied shipping. The light cruiser Koenigsberg, stationed in this area, could no longer wage this war, since, judging by British reports, it was blockaded in the delta of the Rufiji River. At 19:00, Muller released Buresk with orders to proceed to a point about 30 miles north of the Cocos Islands, so that, upon receipt of an order by radio, he would rejoin the cruiser. And the "Emden" went along

direction to the Directorate, where Muller expected to appear at dawn.

He planned to land a landing party on the island to destroy all communications equipment. In addition, the commander of the Emden hoped to kill the cable leading to Australia by towing it further out to sea to make repairs almost impossible. When planning this operation, Muller proceeded from the fact that there were no enemy warships nearby. The radio interception service on the Emden worked excellently. Of course, all enemy warship radio communications were coded, but any signal broadcast over the air betrayed the presence of the ship, and various methods in signaling provided additional information.

Experienced radio operators instantly determined the difference between the transmitters of the Marconi and Telefunken systems, and by the handwriting of the radio operators they accurately determined whether the transmission was from a merchant or warship. Usually, the strictest radio discipline was observed on the Emden. The cruiser almost did not go on the air, communicating with her coal miners using written orders, which indicated the coordinates of the rendezvous, flag semaphores, signal lights and searchlights.

In the Cocos Islands, the presence of the German cruiser was known when he began to call the Buresk with his powerful Telefunken. In response, the radio station of the Directorate Island went on the air, requesting the call signs of the transmitting ship. Having received no answer, the radio operator simply looked out the window and saw an unknown warship anchored near the harbor entrance. And then the island station began to transmit SOS signals.

What made Muller, who had maintained strict and thoughtful radio discipline on the cruiser for so long, acted so recklessly is unknown, but this is precisely what ruined the Emden. It was this, and not some countermeasures planned by the British Admiralty or thoughtful actions to search for the Emden by the ships of the four largest maritime powers. In other words, it was pure coincidence.

It so happened that a large convoy of troop transports, escorted by a whole armada of warships in case of a meeting with the Emden, passed in the area of the Cocos Islands just at the time when the German cruiser arrived there.

As always, on the Emden they carefully listened to the broadcast and came to the conclusion that there were no enemy warships in the operational area. Some ship that responded to the SOS of the island station, according to radio operators, was about 250 miles from the island. From this it followed that even at full speed, it would take him more than 10 hours to approach the island. Ten hours was more than enough time for Muller to carry out his plan and leave.

Unfortunately, in those days the means and methods of radiometry were still in their infancy. In reality, the British convoy was only 50 miles from the island, or only 2 hours away at high speed. The confluence of circumstances that had hitherto favored the Emden now turned against it.

November 9, 1914 "Emden" approached the northern tip of the island. At 06:30, with the first rays of dawn, the cruiser anchored in the port of Refuge - the anchorage of the island of the Directorate. At night, Muller did not dare to approach the island because of the many reefs not marked on the map, not wanting to unmask himself with searchlights.

Lieutenant Mücke was appointed commander of the landing party, and his assistants were junior lieutenants Schmidt and Gissling. With them, 32 armed sailors and 15 technical specialists were to land on the island - the best sailors of the cruiser in the ninth year of service. The landing of such a large number of people on the shore significantly weakened the crew of the Emden, which had already transferred many people to the coal miners.

Upon learning that among the sailors moving ashore with Lieutenant Myuke, there were gunners, Junior Lieutenant Fikentscher reported to the commander that this should not have been done. Muller replied that such a short absence of sailors would not harm the ship, especially since the appearance of the enemy was hardly to be expected.

At 06:30, the landing party embarked on a steam launch and two longboats. According to the plan, the station was to be taken by surprise and destroyed quickly and without much noise. In case the station was guarded by troops, the paratroopers took four heavy machine guns with them. The steam launch took the longboats in tow and, quickly crossing the lagoon, delivered the landing party to the shore.

On the Emden, signalers from the crow's nest kept a close eye on the horizon. There were no signs of the presence of any ships and vessels in the area. True, the British, noticing the Emden approaching the island, managed to broadcast: "Unidentified ship at the entrance", repeating this radiogram several times. The Emden radio operators did their best to jam this radio message, and a few minutes later the paratroopers had already captured the station.

It was impossible to see what was happening on the island because of the impenetrable thickets of coastal palm trees, over which towered a radio tower with a Union Jack raised on it. Suddenly, the radio tower collapsed, which was met on the Emden with shouts of delight. Lieutenant Mücke's team began to act.

Everything seemed to be going great. The weather was perfect, the sea was calm. Trying to make the most of the good weather, Müller ordered the radio operator to call the Buresk to load the coal. The coal miner was not far away, and who knew when the Emden would have a new opportunity to load coal? The command was given to prepare for the loading of coal. The orchestra called upstairs played peppy marches. But Buresk stubbornly did not answer calls on the radio.

Time passed... 08:00... 08:30...

Mueller began to worry. Where is the coal miner? Did his radio fail? If he received the order, he should have appeared at the island somewhere by 10:00. So its smoke will appear above the horizon at about 09:00. Meanwhile, the time allotted to Lieutenant Myuke for actions on the shore was already running out, but he did not appear. Apparently, it took much longer to destroy the station than planned.

Müller began to think that, apparently, it would be necessary to postpone the reception of coal. At that moment, a signalman shouted from the "crow's nest": "I see smoke to the left of the nose!" There was no doubt - Buresk finally appeared. If he hurries, there will still be time to take the coal.

But why does such a thick column of smoke rise above the horizon? After all, Buresk used almost smokeless coal. They recalled that spontaneous combustion of coal had recently occurred in one of the holds of Bureska, which could affect its quality. Or maybe the coal miner, realizing that he was late, just developed the fullest speed?

Muller's adjutant climbed into the "crow's nest" and reported on a ship with two masts and one pipe. Then it seemed to observers that the smoke above the horizon was disappearing, and a new suggestion appeared: perhaps this is a passenger steamer going to Australia. According to an intercepted radio message, he was supposed to be passing somewhere nearby at that time. But soon the signalmen realized that they were mistaken. The smoke began to approach the island again. Preparations for receiving coal on the Emden were completed, and, waiting for the approach of the Buresk, the sailors, gathered on the forecastle, smoked pipes and enjoyed the marches of the ship's orchestra. The bridge was tense.



Those watching the smoke from the "crow's nest" understood that something was wrong. Already very quickly a column of smoke was approaching the island. But they waited, unwilling to report their suspicions yet.

Another 5 minutes passed. Suddenly, from the "crow's nest" an excited voice reported: "A column of smoke is approaching at high speed! We see two tall masts and four chimneys! It's an enemy cruiser!"

It was 9:15 am. A flag signal was immediately raised on the masts of the Emden, urgently recalling the landing party to the ship. From the shore, the signal should have been clearly visible. The masts of an unknown ship have already appeared above the horizon. Sloping masts and thick smoke left no doubt - it was a warship!

The sirens on the Emden warned Lieutenant Mücke and his paratroopers of the danger. Signal flags flying up to the klitik warned that the cruiser was weighing anchor.

But the paratroopers did not appear. We have already managed to make out radio antennas on the approaching ship - typical for a warship. Then the signalmen saw the English naval ensign flying on the gaff.

So, after several months of hunting, the enemy managed to catch the Emden. Now it was necessary to think about how to avoid destruction, since any enemy cruiser was stronger than the Emden.

Müller ordered to raise steam in all boilers. The sirens blared incessantly, calling the paratroopers back, but it soon became clear that there was no longer any possibility of waiting. The enemy was approaching too fast. It was, apparently, the newest light cruiser of the Newcastle class, significantly superior to the Emden in terms of firepower and speed.

The Emden's bells blared loudly.

As sirens wailed, the hoists clanged, feeding shells to the guns. Horns and drums called the sailors to the last battle. An anchor has been chosen. They lingered a little longer to give Lieutenant Mücke one last chance. It was necessary to leave urgently, since the Emden was almost completely deprived of the freedom to maneuver in a narrow, reef-strewn anchorage.

The Emden swerved towards the approaching gate.

"Raise the topmasts!" Mueller ordered. "Full speed!"

Everyone was already in their places on combat alert. At 09:17, the Emden, carrying topmast flags and laying on a northwesterly course, left the lagoon. Going at full speed, the cruiser turned sharply to the right, taking up a convenient position for a battle on the retreat.

Despite the prevailing tension, everything on the cruiser was as usual. From the cellars, shells were uninterruptedly fed. The fuses were screwed into them and the first shots were placed in the fenders. The locks of the guns opened, absorbing the first shells. The barrels of the guns, bulging up, turned on board. The distance was determined, and the gunners already kept the enemy ship in the sights of their guns.

The Emden sped along with a huge white surf up its prow.

"11 thousand meters, 10500 meters, 9500 meters," they continuously reported from the rangefinder post. "Open fire! Volley!" Mueller ordered.

Guns rumbled, and five shells fell short of the very side of the English cruiser. The enemy was moving at a speed of at least 26 knots. "Emden", on which they had not yet managed to raise steam in all boilers, was significantly inferior to him. The Emden's guns fired a second salvo, which fell with a slight overshoot. The third volley achieved several hits, but the Emden was too far away from the enemy to achieve any serious result with its 105-mm guns. Müller ordered a turn two degrees to the right to close the distance.

Meanwhile, the side of the English cruiser flashed with bright flashes of the first return salvo. Columns of water that rose around the Emden unmistakably made it clear that the enemy was armed with 150-mm guns. They were mistaken in considering the enemy ship to be a Newcastle-class cruiser. He turned out to be much more powerful.

Luck is over. Another volley, and the British 152-mm shells will begin to tear the Emden to pieces. The only hope of the Germans was to achieve some kind of fatal hit on the enemy cruiser. With the third salvo, the Emden managed to destroy the rangefinder post on the English cruiser, and for a moment it seemed that the lucky star of the German cruiser was still shining over it. And after the eighth salvo from the Emden, they saw a strong fire that broke out on the enemy ship. The explosion of a German shell set fire to powder shells at one of the bow guns of the English cruiser, incapacitating all the gunners.

The fire was extinguished with a hose by a ship's cabin boy, who later received the Victoria Cross for his feat. Only in the twentieth minute of the battle "Emden" received the first hit. The shell exploded in the radio room. It seemed that the cruiser had been hit with a huge sledgehammer. The radio room was completely destroyed, and all radio operators were either killed or seriously injured. The blast wave threw several people overboard.

The Emden continued to fire furiously. From the bridge they saw how a new fire broke out in the stern of the English cruiser, and the enemy ship turned aside to get out of the shelling. Muller wanted to get close to the enemy, but nothing happened - he was much faster.

The British knew about the deadly German torpedoes with a range of 3500 meters and did not approach the Emden closer than 7000 meters.

Immediately after the shell hit the radio room, the second shell exploded on the quarterdeck near the mainmast. Shrapnel broke the hand of the foreman Menkedik. Another shell exploded on the deck near the conning tower. For a moment, complete silence reigned, torn by the cries and groans of the wounded and dying signalers and gunners. Soon the fire control system failed. The enemy shells destroyed both electrical distribution boards. Then the commands to the steering wheel stopped from the conning tower, and soon the front chimney, knocked down by a shell, fell with a roar on the port side. In the morning, the fixing stretch marks of the pipe were removed. The cruiser's speed and maneuverability immediately fell. Smoke from the stump of the pipe began to spread along the deck, people were suffocating, it was impossible to see the enemy through the sooty sights.

The rate of fire of "Emden" fell due to numerous losses among the gunners, who had no one to replace. The electrical projectile lifters stopped working, and the shells had to be fed to the guns manually.

Captain 2nd Rank Muller understood that the end was not far off. Some of the guns were serviced by one wounded gunner. The rest of the calculation either died, or filed shells from the cellars. It was slow and hard work. Another shell knocked out the steering gear, making the Emden almost uncontrollable. next projectile

smashed the rangefinder, killing and injuring almost everyone in the conning tower. The commander of the rangefinder post, Zimmerman, left idle, rushed to the gun, near which not a single gunner was left. The next explosion killed the officer on the spot. A shell that exploded on the tank mowed down the entire crew of the bow gun. This was followed by a hit in the stern, where at least 30 shells detonated, stacked in a chest for feeding to the stern guns. Everyone, including the commander of the stern battery, Lieutenant Levetsov, was killed. And a great fire raged on the stern. In the interior, due to the failure of the ventilation system and the fire, it was so hot that the paint began to melt on the bulkheads.

The fire spread with incredible speed. The flame cut off in the tiller compartment Gropius and his sailors, who were trying to control the cruiser by hand. The same thing happened with some of the surviving gunners who were still at the guns. Another shell hit the commander's cabin, throwing overboard almost everyone in the stern with a blast wave. Of the 18 people, only the signalman, a non-commissioned officer and two of his subordinates managed to escape.

All the port guns were disabled, and Muller decided, however, without much hope of success, to bring his heavily damaged ship into position for a torpedo attack. Given the high speed of the enemy, this seemed almost impossible. Nevertheless, he managed to turn the cruiser to starboard towards the enemy, who continued to bombard the Emden with shells. The main mast was knocked down by a direct hit. Lieutenant Gerard and the signalman, who were in the "crow's nest", died. The command bridge was destroyed, and the two remaining pipes were ready to collapse at any moment. It was no longer possible to launch a torpedo. The practically undamaged enemy did not give the Emden any chance to get close to him. And new hits continued to tear "Emden"

into parts.

Realizing that it would not be possible to save the ship, Muller decided to jump onto the shore of an uninhabited coral reef near North Keeling Island. It was necessary that the "Emden" did not fall into the hands of the enemy. In addition, the wounded had to be rescued from a horrific death in those shark-infested waters. There are no lifeboats left on the cruiser. Myuke took the boat and two large longboats, and the rest burned down.

Muller turned the cruiser to the right towards the island. The enemy ship also turned on this course, continuing to bombard the Emden with shells, apparently hoping to sink the German cruiser before it even reached the shore. Müller steered the cruiser by standing over the engine room skylight and giving commands with his voice. He intended to throw the Emden on a sand bank between two coral reefs so that it would no longer be possible to remove it from there, and therefore ordered to go full speed ... then ... ordered the kingstones to be opened.

And the enemy cruiser continued to fire. Either they didn't understand that the Emden was actually finished, or they simply decided to practice combat shooting. To avoid unnecessary sacrifices, Muller allowed the survivors to jump overboard and try to swim to the island. Some of those who did just that made it to the shore, and some drowned, drowning in the breaking wave.

After the "Emden" jumped out onto the shallows, the enemy continued to shred it with shells for another long five minutes. Fortunately, if I may say so, at that moment the Buresk appeared and distracted the English cruiser towards itself.

Taking advantage of the respite, Müller ordered the entire crew to assemble on the upper deck to determine casualties. 133 people were killed and 49 seriously injured. Thus, 3/5 of the crew of 314 people were killed or wounded, and the cruiser itself was turned into

a burning pile of warped metal. Everything was broken under the armored deck, too, when a shell hit the hatch in the engine room. Everywhere among the broken parts of the car, in puddles of machine oil, lay corpses. In the boiler room during the battle, when the ventilation failed, the temperature rose to 60 degrees Celsius. The shells of the boilers were damaged by shrapnel. But the stokers continued their hellish work to the end, and only one boiler room, where there was a real threat of a rupture of the steam pipeline, was evacuated.

Meanwhile, the surviving sailors did not sit idle. Engine and boiler rooms were flooded. The cellars were also flooded. Everything that could be was destroyed or thrown overboard, including optical instruments, gun locks and unused shells. The Emden sat firmly on the rocks. The waves of the surf crashed against the cruiser and rolled over it. Thousands of birds swirled in the air above the Emden with loud cries, including gulls of unprecedented size.

Suddenly, in groups, they began to dive onto the deck of the wrecked ship, aiming their claws and beaks at the faces and eyes of the surviving sailors. Healthy still somehow fought them off, but the wounded had a very bad time. They risked being torn apart by hungry vultures that screamed loudly and flapped their wings as they attacked the helpless people. Bleeding sailors tried to hide behind the mangled sheets of superstructure plating. The enraged birds were driven off with rifle shots, and the wounded were carried to the forecastle, where Dr. Luther gave injections of morphine to the most in pain. All the wounded were tormented by thirst. Drinking water containers were broken, but some milk was found among the wreckage of the wardroom.

The lack of water and the strong surf that threatened to break the ship dictated the need to leave the Emden and move to the shore, where you could certainly get both coconut milk and fresh water. Just a hundred meters away, the shores of North Keeling Island were green with luxurious crowns of palm trees. But it was almost impossible to get to it without boats and other watercraft through the surf and a strong side current. They tried to bring the ends to the shore, but nothing happened either. Then several volunteers, tied with ends, tried to swim to the shore. Only one managed to do this, but his end, hitting razor-sharp coral reefs, broke off. The rest failed to break through the surf. They made it to the reef where they were pecked to death by birds.

And then, contrary to all expectations, around 16:00 the enemy cruiser appeared again. Behind her in tow, the cruiser led two longboats from the Bureska. To the surprise of the surviving German sailors, the cruiser turned out to be Australian: either Sydney or Melbourne.

This time, on the Emden, the appearance of the enemy cruiser was greeted with relief. Now they will be saved. The Australian cruiser, having given up the tug with the Bureska longboats, approached the Emden sitting on the rocks at 4000 meters and signaled something with a searchlight. Since there were no signalmen or signal books on the Emden, the Germans could not answer the signal. Muller sent a semaphore to the enemy ship: "We do not have a signal vault."

In response, the enemy cruiser opened fire. It was so unexpected that everyone on the deck of the wrecked Emden was numb with horror. To fire on the wreckage of the ship a few hours after the battle - they did not expect this from such zealots of naval ethics as the British! At least six more shells hit the remains of the Emden, killing and injuring 25 people.

Müller ordered to jump overboard and swim to shore. Many did so, but only a few managed to get to the island. No one could understand why the enemy continued to fire. Someone suggested that this is due to the German naval ensign,

still fluttering on the surviving foremast. Müller ordered the international surrender signal, the white flag, to be hoisted. It was necessary to save the wounded, and the Emden was no longer a warship, but a pile of burning scrap metal. The white flag was hoisted on the guisstock, and the senior sailor Werner, breaking through the flames, climbed the foremast at the risk of his life and lowered the battle topmast flag.

This saved many lives - the enemy cruiser ceased fire. However, the Australian cruiser was in no hurry to rescue the surviving Emden sailors. He sent a boat with junior lieutenant Fikentscher captured on the Bureska to the Emden, informing him that he was heading to the island of the Directorate to find out what happened there, promising to return later.

The sailors of the Emden were again left to their own devices. Some of those who jumped overboard climbed the ropes back onto the deck of the wrecked cruiser. Others were still trying to break through the surf. From the deck of the Emden, with pain in their hearts, they watched how huge waves covered the unfortunates, dragging them back, killing them on the sharp swords of coral reefs. During the night, a downpour poured down, solving the problem with drinking water.

Many believed that the Sydney would not return, especially if Mücke met the landing Australians with fire from his four machine guns. Muller ordered an international distress signal to be raised on the surviving mast, hoping that sooner or later some ship would pass by. Lieutenant Fikentscher, who arrived at the Emden, reported to Muller that the Bureska had to be flooded so that the enemy would not get it.

A wave from the stern rocked the Emden on the rocks. The ship vibrated and gnashed, ready, it seemed, to fall apart. The wounded screamed and moaned, constantly asking for water. Rainwater supplies quickly dried up. Dr. Schwabe, who tried to swim to the shore and get water there, died when a wave threw him onto a coral reef.

At dawn the Australian cruiser reappeared, slowly approaching the Emden. People on the deck of the Emden were anxiously awaiting what he would do this time. Will the fire reopen? Just in case, the German sailors took refuge under the ruined upper deck. For about an hour, "Sydney" scoured around, his victim, and then again disappeared over the horizon.

On the Emden, Muller divided the ship's cash register among the surviving sailors. Money was now to be considered personal property and could not be confiscated by the enemy. (Later, in captivity, the sailors returned to their commander everything to the last penny).

"Sydney" appeared for the third time somewhere around 13:00. The boat left him and headed for the Emden. Australian lieutenant Garcia boarded the Emden with a message to Muller from the Sydney commander, Captain 1st Rank Glossop.

Sooty and mortally tired, Muller, in a burnt uniform stained with the blood of his comrades, took the letter, not quite realizing what it all meant. Under the groans and cries of the wounded, the text in English was difficult to understand. A letter written on the letterhead of the Australian HMS Sydney and addressed to the Commander of the Imperial German Navy ship Emden stated:

"At sea. November 9, 1914.

Dear sir! In the name of humanity, I have the honor to demand the surrender of your ship. Paying tribute to your valor, I am forced to state the following:

1. Your ship is on the rocks. Three chimneys and the mast are knocked down. Most of the guns are disabled.

2. You are unable to leave this place.

On the other hand, the ship entrusted to me is safe and sound. Therefore, from my point of view, surrender for you is not a dishonor, but only the result of unfavorable circumstances. I will do my best for your wounded and transfer them to the nearest hospital.

I have the honor, sir, to remain your devoted servant.

John A. Glossop, commander of the Sydney."

It was difficult to object to this letter, and Muller ordered to move to Sydney. The English boat that stood at the Emden did not have a stretcher for the wounded, and therefore the lightly wounded, able to move independently, were the first to board it. The boat went to the Sydney and returned with a stretcher. From "Emden" began to unload the seriously wounded. The task was very difficult and required long hours of work, but the English sailors performed it with their usual skill in all types of sea practice. The last to board the boat were junior lieutenants Witgeft, Prince Hohenzollern and Schall, as well as three unwounded mechanical engineers.

Remaining on board, Müller and Second Lieutenant Fikentscher poured gasoline under the forecastle on the sailor's uniform, thrown out of the broken lockers, and set it on fire. Captain 2nd Rank von Müller was the last to leave the Emden on the command boat from the Sydney, escorted by a group of British officers. On board the Sydney, the commander of the Emden was greeted with the sounds of bugles and boatswain's pipes. A guard of honor was lined up.

On the ladder, Muller was met by Captain 1st Rank Glossop, who escorted the German commander to his cabin, where he had the opportunity to take a shower and change clothes. The sailors of the "Emden" were placed in a spacious cockpit on the forecastle. Dinner was prepared for them and cigarettes were given out. The wounded were placed in the infirmary, where the British doctors did their best to alleviate their suffering. The lives of many seriously wounded were saved by their efforts. Meanwhile, a boat was sent from Sydney to North Keeling Island under the command of Second Lieutenant Schall from Emden to pick up German sailors who managed to swim to the island. The next morning they were all transferred to the Sydney. Several who died during the night, including Dr. Schwabe, were buried on the island.

November 11 "Sydney" headed for the island of the Directorate, where he landed a doctor, and then headed for Colombo. The captured sailors from the Emden, including their commander, hoped to find out something about the fate of Lieutenant Myuke and fifty paratroopers landed on Directorate Island on the eve of the battle. But nothing could be found out, except that the paratroopers, armed to the teeth, landed from the Sydney, searched the entire island, and found no one. Where did Myuke and his team go? German sailors will learn about the incredible story that happened to Lieutenant Mücke and the landing party from the Emden many years later, when they return home from captivity after the end of the war.

## IX

Having taken prisoners from the Emden, the Sydney cruiser was overcrowded. Part of the healthy sailors from the Emden even had to be placed on the upper deck under awnings. The auxiliary cruiser Impress of Russia was called to Sydney by radio, where on November 12 all the slightly wounded and some of the healthy captured German sailors were transplanted. Officers and

the seriously wounded remained on the Sydney. November 15 at about 10:00 "Sydney" arrived in Colombo. The port was filled with Allied warships, among which stood out the British cruisers Hampshire, Melbourne and Newcastle, the Russian cruiser Askold and the huge Japanese cruiser Ibuki. There were also about forty transports from the convoy that the Sydney had previously escorted in the port.

In Colombo, Captain 1st Rank Glossop read out to the Emden officers a radio message from Churchill, in which the First Lord of the Admiralty, recognizing that all the actions of the Emden took place without violating the rules of humanity and British maritime laws, allowed the Emden officers to keep their daggers with them.

The German officers appreciated this gesture of military courtesy, but they did not have daggers. They remained among the wreckage of their cruiser, sitting on rocks in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The commander of the Hampshire, Captain 1st Rank Grant, arrived on the Sydney to express his admiration for the valor of the Emden crew to Muller.

Meanwhile, boats and boats were taken from the Sydney to the coastal hospital of the wounded German and British sailors. 49 Emden sailors, including Lieutenant Gides, after recovery were sent to Australia in a prisoner of war camp. Müller himself, Dr. Luther, junior lieutenants Prince von Hohenzollern and Fikentscher with 32 non-commissioned officers and sailors were transferred to the Orvieto liner. Senior mechanic Ellerbroek, junior lieutenant Witgeft and 40 sailors were sent to the Omrah liner.

On November 28, together with the convoy that left Colombo, the prisoners were taken to Suez, where everyone, except for those who were on the Orvieto, was transferred to the Hampshire cruiser. Those on the Orvieto were delivered to Port Said on December 2. There, the Hampshire was already waiting for them on a barrel.

In Port Said, the prisoners were told that they were being taken not to England, but to Malta. Captain 2nd Rank Muller and all the officers and sailors of the Emden who were with him on the liner were also assembled on the Hampshire. Captain 1st Rank Grant greeted them very warmly, declaring the German officers "guests of the wardroom", and even gave up his cabin to Muller, temporarily moving to the commander's "nook" behind the chart room.

In Port Said, civilian clothes were purchased for the captured officers, and the sailors were dressed in English uniforms without insignia. Being on the Hampshire, the captured sailors of the Emden learned about the victory of Admiral Spee's squadron at Coronel.

On Sunday, December 6, the Hampshire arrived at La Valletta, where the prisoners were taken ashore. After the warm hospitality extended to them by the English sailors, they could hardly have expected such from the British military police guarding the prisoners of war. Captain 2nd Rank Muller, along with his officers, was sent to the Verdala camp, and the foremen and sailors were sent to the St. Clemente camp, and later to Fort Salvatore.

Müller and his crew were to spend many years in a POW camp. For the dynamic and active nature of Captain 2nd Rank Karl von Muller, this was real torture. The torture of forced inaction, as the fire of war blazed over the world, and his country fought for its existence. For days on end, Muller wrote letters to the families of his dead sailors, and then tried to describe the history of the Emden and restore all the details of the last battle of his cruiser. He was often seen immersed in thought, silently walking along the stone slabs of the fortress courtyard, where the officer's camp was located. The Emden was finished, but its loyal colliers outlived their patron.

The day before the death of the cruiser, November 8, 1914, Lieutenant Lauterbach with 16 sailors

led the Exford collier to the island of Socotra in the western Indian Ocean to wait for the Emden there, since Muller planned to move the area of operations to the exit from the Red Sea. The Exford waited in vain for the Emden at the appointed place until the end of November, and then went towards Padang on the west coast of Sumatra.

On December 11, while in sight of the coast, the Exford kept within a five-mile zone, where the English auxiliary cruiser Himalaya simply stumbled upon it. Lauterbach tried to prove that the Exford was under the protection of Dutch neutrality, but the British did not want to listen to anything. Resistance was impossible. Lauterbach and his 16 sailors were transferred to the English auxiliary cruiser Express of Japan, which delivered them to Singapore on December 15. The prisoners were sent to the Tanglin camp, where they were joyfully greeted by the sailors of the Emden, captured on the Pontoporos and Marcomannia. Both ships were captured by the British cruiser Yarmouth on October 12. "Marcomannia" managed to flood, and "Pontoporos" was brought to Singapore.

On February 15, 1915, a regiment of the 5th Hindu Infantry Division mutinied in Singapore and freed German prisoners of war. English troops suppressed the rebellion and caught almost all the released prisoners, sending them away from Singapore to Australia. But Lieutenant Lauterbach managed to escape from Singapore during the riot. Having survived a lot of adventures, the lieutenant managed to get to the Dutch Indies, from where he arrived in the United States. Having reached New York, Lauterbach boarded a steamer there and returned to Germany in October 1915. He was promoted to lieutenant and from January 1916 to November 1917 commanded the auxiliary ship "K".

In collaboration with journalists, Lauterbach wrote several books about his adventures.

Of those held in Malta, only Lieutenant Fikentscher attempted to escape. Having escaped from the camp, he hid for some time in La Valletta, and then reached Sicily in a simple rowing boat. However, by this time Italy was already at war with Germany, and the lieutenant simply fell from one captivity to another. Later, he was exchanged through the Red Cross and returned to his home in Augsburg on October 21, 1917.

In October 1916, Captain 2nd Rank Muller was unexpectedly transferred from Malta to England. In September 1917, Muller managed to escape from the camp, but he was soon caught and in November 1917 sentenced to 56 days of solitary confinement. In January 1918, due to a serious deterioration in health (attacks of tropical malaria), Muller was released from captivity, arrived in Rotterdam and was interned in Holland. Having given his word of honor not to participate in the war, the former commander of the Emden received permission to travel to his hometown of Blankenberg in the Harz.

At the beginning of 1918, Germany was no longer the country Müller remembered. The patriotic enthusiasm of August 1914 has long since vanished without a trace. About "Emden" and its glorious deeds were almost forgotten. They talked about Verdun and Jutland, about meat grinders and gas attacks on the Western Front, about the entry of the United States into the war, about mutinies in the navy, about strikes in munitions factories, about the famine caused by the British blockade.

A terrible war with millions of dead radically changed the country and people. Newspapers, from the first pages of which the name of Captain 2nd Rank Muller once did not leave, barely noticed his return. Back in 1914, Muller was awarded the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd class, but who could be surprised by this now. Iron Crosses of all classes were handed out by the thousands to privates who knocked out British tanks or recaptured their own trenches from the French. In this regard, the Main Naval Headquarters - the only place where Muller was still remembered - decided to mark one of the best commanders of the German fleet by presenting him to the highest military award - the Grand Cross for valor - "Pour le Mérite".



The submission by instance was sent to the Kaiser's Naval Cabinet, which was headed by Admiral von Muller, the namesake of the Emden commander. Admiral von Müller reacted very coldly. In a private letter to the Chief of the Main Naval Staff, Admiral von Golzendorf, he noted that if it were not for the popularity of the Emden commander in the country, he should have been put on trial for ill-conceived actions near the Cocos Islands that led to the loss of the ship. Admiral von Golzendorf replied with a long report addressed to the head of the Naval Cabinet, where he pointed out that despite obvious mistakes, the commander of the Emden, due to the totality of his actions, deserved the award, to which he was presented by the Main Naval Staff. The report was forwarded directly to the Kaiser, who, in spite of everything, still retained in his soul the remnants of pre-war romanticism.

Wilhelm II wrote a resolution on the report: "Yes, more than deserved." As a result, on March 21, 1918, Captain 2nd Rank Muller received the highest message from the Kaiser's headquarters, which said: "Based on the report submitted to me by the Main Naval Headquarters about the circumstances of the actions of my cruiser Emden and its last battle, I hereby award you with the Order of the Pull la Merit". Your personal valor and the valor of your crew are admirable. You weakened the name of your ship, giving the whole world an example of a merciless and at the same time noble cruising war. The proposals for rewarding your subordinates that you made at the end of your report, I accept with pleasure.

Wilhelm, Emperor and King".

In the autumn of 1918, Captain 2nd Rank Muller returned from Holland. He was promoted to captain of the 1st rank and assigned to one of the departments of the Naval Ministry in Berlin.

The last years of his life, the former commander of the "Emden" lived in his native Blankenberge almost completely alone. He rejected many tempting offers to write memoirs, considering it impossible for himself to make money from the blood of his comrades. Müller actively corresponded with Admiral Tirpitz and Captain 1st Rank Raeder, who worked in the archives on the history of the cruiser war.

The empire had collapsed, and the commander of the Emden was willing to devote his energies to resurrecting it. He was even elected as a deputy to the parliament of Braunschweig. However, all these plans were not destined to come true. On March 11, 1923, Captain 1st Rank Karl von Müller died a little short of his fiftieth birthday. The Emden itself stood on the rocks until the mid-1950s, when it was dismantled by a Japanese ship-breaking company.

In 1927, the new cruiser Emden, built during the Weimar Republic, approached the remains of the Emden near the Cocos Islands.

From the cruiser they saluted the remains of their glorious predecessor. During this campaign, the sailors of the new "Emden" explored and discovered the deepest place in the Pacific Ocean, calling it the "Emden Hollow". Currently, the only memory of those distant times is a memorial plaque installed on the Bundeswehr barracks in the city of Emden. Captain 1st rank Müller was an honorary citizen of the city of Emden, and grateful descendants assigned his name to the old army barracks on the outskirts of the city. The memorial plaque reads: "Captain 2nd Rank Karl von Müller, commanding the Emden cruiser of the Kaiser fleet, destroyed a large number of enemy merchant ships in the Indian Ocean, bombarded and burned the British oil reserves in Madras, and also sank the Russian cruiser Zhemchug in Penang." and the French destroyer Musket. On November 9, 1914, after a fierce battle with the Australian cruiser Sydney, Captain 2nd Rank Muller was forced to throw his heavily damaged ship on the rocks off North Island.

Keeling. In this battle, almost half of the cruiser's crew died, valiantly fighting for Vaterland. To the glorious ship, its commander and crew from the inhabitants of the city, whose name they glorified throughout the world.

Australian divers carefully searched the wrecked Emden sitting on the rocks, finding its "cash desk" - several chests stuffed with silver dollars. This treasure has become the property of the Australian government. Part of these silver coins went to the minting of the medal, established in 1918. The medal is very interesting in its appearance. It consists of a silver dollar, to which a silver strip is soldered on top with the inscription:

"Sydney - Emden, November 9, 1914"

The composition is completed with a silver crown with a ribbon ring. By order of the Australian Navy (No. 58 for 1918), the medal was intended to reward officers and sailors of the cruiser Sydney, as well as employees of a radio station in the Cocos Islands. The medal was minted in the amount of one thousand copies and was issued by the Australian Navy.

In 1933, the Australian Government, as a gesture of goodwill, handed over to Germany the stern board of the wrecked cruiser with the inscription "Emden". This board was accepted by Germany as the greatest national relic. At the celebrations on this occasion, the Reich President Paul von Hindenburg himself was present, stating on this occasion: "At the sound of his ("Emden") name, our hearts are filled with pride.

List of officers of the light cruiser Emden in November 1914

Commander: Captain 2nd Rank Muller.

Senior officer: Lieutenant Commander Myuke.

Senior navigator: Lieutenant Commander Gropius (deceased).

Navigator: Lieutenant Commander Kloipper.

Senior artilleryman: senior lieutenant Gaide (killed).

Artillery officers: Senior Lieutenant Leventsov (died);

senior lieutenant Geerdes;

Senior Lieutenant Lauterbach.

Miner: Senior Lieutenant Witgeft.

Watch officers: Lieutenant Guerard (deceased);

Lieutenant Fikentscher;

Lieutenant Zimmerman;

Lieutenant Prince von Hohenzollern (Franz Joseph);

Lieutenant Schmidt;

Lieutenant Schall;

Lieutenant Ensling.

Senior Mechanical Engineer: Ellerbrook.

Mechanical Engineer: Andresen;

Haas;

Shtoffers (deceased).

Ship's doctor: Dr. Luther.

Junior doctor: Shvabe (deceased).

Auditor: Vonchekovsky (deceased).

## APPLICATION

The death of the cruiser "Zhemchug" from the torpedoes of the cruiser "Emden" on the night of October 14-15 in the roadstead of Penang.

(From the materials of the commission of inquiry).

The cruiser "Zhemchug", which was together with the cruiser "Askold" at the beginning of the war as part of the naval forces of the Far East in Vladivostok, due to the lack of cruising forces among the allies to protect trade and fight German cruisers, was included in the English squadron guarding the northeastern part of the Indian Ocean and the area of the Sunda Archipelago, where the German cruiser Emden operated during this period.

During the period from mid-August to October 13, the Zhemchug cruiser completed a number of assignments to escort military transports and merchant ships and to inspect various areas and groups of islands in the archipelago in search of the Emden cruiser and its coal miners.

Returning to Penang on October 13 (26), 1914 from her last trip to the Nicobar and Andam Islands, the Pearl received permission to sort out the mechanisms and clean the boilers, despite the fact that Penang was an unprotected anchorage, where all security measures were reduced to expulsion at sea for the patrol of one destroyer, commander

"Pearls" Captain 2nd Rank Baron Cherkasov, contrary to the warnings of local port authorities, did not find it necessary to provide the ship with the necessary measures to increase vigilance and enhance its combat readiness in case of an enemy attack.

Considering that when the latter appeared, he would be warned in time by the local command, the cruiser commander, referring to ill health, went ashore to the hotel, leaving the ship to the senior officer and not ensuring combat readiness on the cruiser in conditions of parking on an unprotected roadstead.

The congress of the commander ashore created the impression on the ship that the stay in Penang was a period of rest after campaigns, and this was not long in affecting the entire regime of the ship's external service, its combat readiness and vigilance. The position of the cruiser in the roadstead stern to the entrance, due to the lack of a spring, did not allow at any moment to open fire on the entrance with the whole side, the service was carried out "in an anchor way", and although the guns facing the exit were "just in case" loaded, but personal their composition was not in full readiness. At the same time, the ship stood at night with anchor lights. Boilers were alkalized at Zhemchuga, and that was all.

the boilers, except for three, were opened in order to start cleaning the pipes early in the morning.

At the time of the Emden's approach from the watch, it was reported to the senior officer about the three-pipe, and then again about the four-pipe cruiser, which aroused his desire to personally see and check the going ship. He got up and began to dress to go to the upper deck, when suddenly gunfire was heard. All other officers were in the cabins.

The explosion of a torpedo from the "Emden" flooded: the stern machine, the 6th stoker, the stern cartridge cellars, the infirmary and the commander's cabin were destroyed. Passing by the "Pearl", "Emden" fired volleys at the waist, after which they concentrated fire on the bow.

Turning around, the enemy cruiser fired a second torpedo that hit the bow compartment of the Pearl. From the explosion of the torpedo, the bow cartridge cellar exploded. One of the volleys shot down whaleboat No. 2, the 6th gun was taken out of action and the 4th was jammed. After the explosion of the cellar on the forecastle, the tank gun was destroyed, and the stern gun settled down and could not rotate. There were many dead and wounded on the deck. The explosion and shells broke the steam pipes, the drainage means did not work, and the electric lighting went out. From the moment the attack began, panic seized the personnel, aggravated by the confusion of the commanding staff. When the senior officer went to the upper deck, he saw smoke and steam at the aft elevator coming from the hatch. Fearing the explosion of the cellars, he ordered them to be flooded. It should be noted that, even realizing what was happening, the senior officer did not give the order to play a combat alert, and, remaining a witness to the events, walked around the upper deck, giving a number of orders that did not matter.

The initiative to open the cellars for supplying shells to the guns belonged to one of the sailors, who turned to the senior officer for the keys. The latter went to the cabin, but there were no keys in the usual place, since the cabin was destroyed. After a fruitless search for them on deck, he ordered the locks of the cellars to be broken. Later, going up again, the senior officer was on the quarterdeck when there was an explosion of a second torpedo in the bow. The cruiser shuddered, and the entire tank was covered with shrapnel. "Pearl" began to sit down with her nose and fall to the starboard side.

Attempts by the inspector officer to get shells to repel the attack ended in failure, because the cellars were locked, and the locks could not be broken.

Entering the wardroom filled with suffocating gases, the inspector began to look for items to break the locks and chose the rod from the fan. Later, while on the upper deck, he was trying to free one of the guns from the whaleboat hanging on it, when suddenly a deafening explosion was heard. A flame of a characteristic yellow color, which occurs when burning smokeless gunpowder, soared above the top of the mast. It was the explosion of the bow cellar. All kinds of fragments rained down on the deck. Those who saw this picture claimed that the roll of the ship at that time was at least 15 degrees, and it increased rapidly, so that the personnel had to hold on to stand on the deck; the feed rose a lot. Water began to flood the upper deck, people were washed away by a wave, and the cruiser was overwhelmed more and more. After the explosion, the senior mechanical engineer ran out of the cabin and rushed to the engine room. He ordered the oil lighting to be turned on, as the electricity had gone out and it was completely dark below. Remembering that all the boilers were open for cleaning, he decided that there was no need for him to go to the car.

At this time, he was informed that the 3rd stoker on duty was already flooded. Looking for a hole, he walked towards the running water and made his way into the ruined commander's cabin, where the water was knee-deep. The place of water entry was in the commander's bedroom. After checking that there were no people left in the engine room, and making sure that they all got out, the mechanical engineer headed for the left gangway. At this time, the stern rose strongly with a roll to starboard. In view of the sinking of the ship, the senior mechanical engineer jumped from the deck into

water. Having sailed away from the ship and looking back, he saw that from the cruiser only one mast.

Awakened by the explosion, the junior mechanical engineer, without getting dressed, jumped out of the cabin to run to the car. However, realizing that penetration into the car was pointless, since it was not warmed up and could not give a move, he decided to go down to the stoker to spread the steam. As he descended into the stoker's office in the darkness, he felt water under his feet. It turned out that the mine was already flooded with water. Going down then to another stoker, he found water in it. The people who were there were partly injured, the rest, seized with panic, ran aimlessly, without taking any measures to fight for the ship's survivability and save themselves.

A few minutes later, a dull thump was felt in the room, the cruiser shuddered. And the water in the department immediately began to rise, so that its level quickly rose almost to the knees. The cruiser tilted heavily. Seeing the inevitability of the death of the ship, the junior mechanical engineer allowed the personnel who were in the boiler room to go upstairs. Jumping out on the upper deck and looking overboard, he saw that the water was already pouring into the portholes of the wardroom. The cruiser quickly went to the bottom with a roll of about 40 degrees, forming a large whirlpool. The chief of the watch, testifying on the issue of the death of the Zhemchug, confirmed that the ship was not ready to repel the attack. Only about 12 shells were carried to the upper deck; guns No. 1 and No. 6 were loaded, but they did not manage to open fire from them. The navigator of the "Pearl", being already on the upper deck and seeing the passing "Emden", decided to open artillery fire on it, but the gun was jammed, and its lock was open. The officer rushed to the fender, where the shells of the first shots should have been, but they were not there.

Soon he heard the Pearls return fire, but from other guns. The artillery officer, who ran out to the upper deck, believed that "it was unnecessary to control fire at such a short distance, while the situation required the immediate opening of fire." He opened fire from the stern gun, having managed to fire only 3 shots. When the "Emden" turned around and passed on the reverse tack, the artillery officer fired another 3-4 shots, but at that moment there was a second explosion, the ship jumped up and began to fall on the starboard side.

The whole episode lasted no more than 4-5 minutes. The mine officer, running out to the waist, went to the forecastle to get into the torpedo tube compartment and prepare the torpedoes taken out of the tubes, but he did not succeed, because thick black smoke and fire came out of the entrance hatch and the bow elevator. The passage turned out to be littered with a pile of some debris. Wanting to find out through the voice tubes what the servants of the vehicles had managed to do, he climbed onto the forecastle, but at that time the Emden fired a volley at the forecastle. One of the wreckage hit him in the thigh, and he fell to the deck.

The investigation found that due to the lack of keys to the cellars, they tried to open them with an ax. At this time, water was already pouring into the supply room through the holes in the bulkheads from the stern car, which quickly filled the room, so that people had to get out by battering down the door. When the lock at the cellar was opened, only two cartridges were fired from there. By this time, the position of the "Pearl" was so critical that shouts were already heard on the upper deck: "Save yourself, who can!"

Killed: 1 officer and 81 crew members. Wounded: 3 officers and 112 crew members. In total, 55.63 percent of the crew failed. Upon arrival in Russia, the ship's commander and senior officer were put on trial, which sentenced them to be demoted to sailors.

(Quoted from the book by K.P. Puzyrevsky "Damage to ships from underwater explosions and the struggle for survivability."

L.-M., 1938)

## GHOST SHIP

### AUXILIARY CRUISER KARLSRUHE

The light cruiser Karlsruhe was laid down at the Germania shipyard in Kiel on September 21, 1911. The ship was launched on November 11, 1912. The solemn speech during the descent was delivered by the mayor of Karlsruhe, the capital of Baden, Franz Siegrist. He also broke the bottle on the nose of the new cruiser, becoming its official godfather.

For its class, the Karlsruhe was a fairly large ship; it had 6191 tons of full displacement and a length of 142.2 meters. The ship was armed with twelve 105 mm guns and two 500 mm underwater torpedo tubes. It could also carry up to 120 mines. The two-shaft power plant "Karlsruhe" consisted of two turbines and 14 boilers of the so-called "naval" type. Ten boilers were coal-fired, four were oil-fired. The stock of coal was 1300 tons, oil - 200 tons. The cruising range at a speed of 12 knots exceeded 5500 nautical miles. Four chimneys and an almost Atlantic stem gave the new cruiser an aggressively swift look.

On sea trials in December 1913, the Karlsruhe showed a speed of 28.5 knots, developing 37,885 horsepower with machines.

On January 15, 1914, the light cruiser Karlsruhe officially entered service under the command of Captain 2nd Rank Ludeke. The crew of the cruiser was 373 people.

Even in the process of building the Karlsruhe, it was decided to send it as a stationer to the Caribbean waters, replacing the Bremen cruiser that needed repair there. However, the delay in completing the Karlsruhe led to the fact that the cruiser Dresden was sent to replace the Bremen. Now Karlsruhe had to replace Dresden, and at the same time represent Germany at the upcoming celebrations on the occasion of the opening of the Panama Canal.

On June 14, 1914, the Karlsruhe left Kiel, becoming the first turbine cruiser sent by the command of the Kaiser fleet to the ocean.

July 1 "Karlsruhe" came to the island of St. Humas, where he received a message about the murder in Sarajevo of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Ferdinand and his wife.

On July 5, 1914, the ship arrived in Port-au-Prince in Haiti to take German subjects under protection during the riots that broke out there. On July 9, the Karlsruhe left Port-au-Prince and on July 12 arrived in Vera Cruz, which was engulfed in unrest, where it found the German cruiser Dresden in the roadstead.

The German ambassador to Mexico, retired Rear Admiral von Ginze, ordered the Dresden to move to Puerto Mexico by July 15 and wait there for the arrival of Mexican President Guerta and the Minister of War Blanket with their families, in order to deliver them to Kingston together with the British cruiser Bristol. Jamaica. Prior to this, Guerta had to publicly resign as President of Mexico.

The commander of the Dresden, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler, gathered a meeting on board his cruiser, which was attended by the commander of the Karlsruhe, Captain 2nd Rank Ludeke, and the commander of the English cruiser Bristol. In 1800, the Bristol went to sea to sail to Puerto Mexico. Having waited for his departure, the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler ordered Dresden to leave as well.

Since the German ambassador attached great importance to the secret of the entire enterprise, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler went first on a false easterly course, and then lay in the wake of the Bristol. Despite the strict secrecy demanded by the retired Rear Admiral von Ginze, the whole city knew about it on the day the cruisers left.

Actually, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler did not want to take part in this "secret" mission at all. According to the order he had, he was to take command of Karlsruhe, transferring Dresden to Captain 2nd Rank Ludeke. After that, the Dresden had to urgently, as required by the order of the Admiralty, return to Germany. The Admiralty insisted on speeding up the return of the Dresden, leaving the Karlsruhe stationed throughout the Caribbean.

An unexpected order somewhat violated the plans of the German naval command. Captain 2nd rank Koehler was in a hurry to complete the task entrusted to him by the ambassador. On the morning of July 16, Dresden and Bristol met at the mouth of Toatzacoalcos and soon stood on the roads of Puerto Mexico.

Even at the stage of preliminary negotiations, President Guerta expressed an indispensable desire that only he, the Minister of War and one footman would be admitted to the Dresden. The family and retinue had to go on the Bristol. This was discussed at a meeting of commanders before leaving Vera Cruz, and the British did not object at all.

On the same day, under an escort of heavily armed cavalry, families, retinue and servants arrived. All of them were taken aboard the Bristol, but the next day, to the amazement of the German sailors, they were disembarked. The commander of the Bristol assured that he had not yet received orders to leave Puerto Mexico. This order was not received on either the 18th or 19th July. Then the British commander began to claim that he had received orders to guard the families of the President and the Minister of War in Puerto Mexico City, and not to take them to Jamaica.

On the evening of July 17, Guerta arrived in Puerto Mexico City. He did not want to go anywhere until the Bristol took on board his family and the family of the Minister of War. Koehler was nervous: this confusion was postponing the change of "Dresden" "Karlsruhe" and the departure of "Dresden" to Germany. On July 18, President Guerta and his Minister of War Blanket arrived at the Dresden. Captain 1st rank Koehler, as he was ordered, met them solemnly. The wives and daughters of Guerta and Blanket were invited to the saloon for lunch. The ship's orchestra played, there were dances. Guerta began to beg Koehler to take his wife, four daughters, a footman and his wife and daughter of the Minister of War to the Dresden. For his own retinue, Guerta ordered a steamer that came from Vera Cruz. Captain 2nd rank Koehler, in order to quickly get rid of this burden, agreed. On July 20, all household members arrived at the Dresden, and at 18:00 - three days later than planned - the cruiser went to sea. Koehler ceded his cabin to Guerta's wife and her daughters. The president himself was placed in the cabin of the senior officer. War Minister Blanket and the rest of the ladies were assigned to the officers' quarters. The orchestra played for their entertainment. However, all the passengers suffered so much from seasickness that they did not have any pleasure from sea travel. The president's wife complained that the British on the Bristol received her in the most piggy way. She left the Bristol of her own accord, as she would have preferred to travel in a boxcar rather than an English cruiser.

July 24, when the island of Jamaica had already opened on the horizon, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler received a radiogram from the Admiralty. The radiogram spoke of the deteriorating political situation in Europe, in particular, the growing tension in relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, threatening to lead to war at any moment. At such a tense time, the radiogram stressed, an urgent return to Germany of the Dresden and Strassburg cruisers, as well as the Panther gunboat, is necessary. "Karlsruhe" remains in the Atlantic Ocean in case of emergency

receive special instructions.

On July 24, at 13:00, the Dresden arrived at Kingston and moored at the coal pier of the steamship company Hamburg-American Line. The cruiser Karlsruhe, which was supposed to wait for the Dresden in Kingston, left for Port-au-Prince, where riots broke out again, threatening the lives and property of German subjects. President Guerta, his household and retinue were put ashore. The President warmly thanked Captain 2nd Rank Koehler for his hospitality, presenting him with his golden pencil as a memento, with which he signed all decrees and orders. Guerta presented the senior officer of the cruiser with an old Spanish gold coin, which he had once received from an old fortune teller and wore as a talisman. The Dresden auditor received a revolver as a gift from the president, and all the other officers and sailors received a gold coin as a keepsake.

On the same day at 18:00, the Dresden put to sea, heading from Kingston to Port-au-Prince to meet with the Karlsruhe. On the way, a radiogram was received from the English cruiser Berwick, in which the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler wished him good luck in his service on the new beautiful cruiser, which was the Karlsruhe. The Berwick sailed from Port-au-Prince, where her sailors could get a good look at the new German cruiser. In the ports of the West Indies, British, German and American ships were then serving jointly, protecting the interests of their countries and the lives of their citizens.

Often solving the same tasks, constantly exchanging visits, participating in joint celebrations and interacting with each other, they least of all thought that someday they would have to meet in battle. This left a well-known psychological imprint on the events of the first days of the First World War.

The Dresden had been there at the same time as the Berwick during her previous stop in Puerto Mexico. The commanders exchanged visits and were very pleased with each other. On the same day, the Dresden arrived in Port-au-Prince and at 17:00 anchored next to the Karlsruhe. Everything was ready for the change of commanders. Captain 2nd rank Ludeke with one of his officers was supposed to go to Dresden, and captain 2nd rank Koehler and senior lieutenant Aust - to Karlsruhe. Two American battleships smoked in the roadstead, which meant that unrest continued on the coast.

On July 26, with the hoisting of the flag on the cruisers, a change of commanders took place. Captain 2nd rank Koehler addressed his new subordinates with a brief speech, ending with an official "cheers" in honor of the emperor. On the Dresden, everyone was already living with dreams of an early return to their homeland. In the radiogram sent to Koehler from Berlin, the Dresden route was even scheduled: July 28-29 - St. Thomas Island, August 6-7 - Azores, August 12 - arrival in Wilhelmshafen.

Most of the Dresden officers and non-commissioned officers were married people, so the joy of the upcoming return to their homeland was read on almost every face, especially since this return has already been delayed several times. When Senior Lieutenant Aust, before leaving for Karlsruhe, came to say goodbye to the senior officer of Dresden, wishing him "a quick and joyful meeting with his family in his homeland," he sighed and said: "Who knows? Maybe you, Aust, will return to your homeland before me."

These words turned out to be prophetic. Senior Lieutenant Aust himself found living conditions on the Karlsruhe not as comfortable as on the Dresden.

"The first impression made on us by our new ship was not very good," the young officer wrote in his diary. - In terms of the comforts of life, we were spoiled by the Dresden. The cabins, saloons, and other living quarters were comparatively cool there, and there was plenty of air in them. On the Karlsruhe in a cabin



The commander was so unbearably hot that he immediately settled into his traveling cabin on the bridge, and used his room only for receptions. It was a little better at sea, as there was an influx of air from the portholes. It was also stuffy in the room of the navigator, the auditor and the office. In the officer cabins, located in the aft part of the living deck, it was no better.

On July 26 at 16:00, Karlsruhe left Port-au-Prince, heading for Havana, where she arrived around midnight on July 28 along with a small Italian cruiser. Captain 2nd Rank Koehler moved ashore, paying a visit to the representative of the American government and the German envoy. News from Europe came one worse than the other. The war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia has already begun. Almost all countries have announced mobilization. From day to day, the outbreak of war between Germany and France and between Germany and Russia was expected.

In the evening, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler, with a group of his officers, was at a dinner at the German consulate, where he was shown a radiogram sent from Berlin to the German consulates in Havana, St. Thomas, New Orleans, Tampico, Vera Cruz and Puerto Mexico City, and also to the consulates general from Washington to Buenos Aires, warning of the very likely outbreak of a major European war and urging German diplomats to take the measures provided for by the secret mobilization instructions. However, at the moment the situation was still so unclear that the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler decided to postpone the departure from Havana for a day, hoping to receive new information about the situation in Europe through the consulate.

From Havana, Koehler planned to go to Vera Cruz, but information had already been received that English and French ships were being drawn there from all Caribbean stations, although the political situation in Mexico did not seem to give any reason for this.

On July 29, in the afternoon, a reception of the German Naval League was arranged on the cruiser. All formality was forgotten. While music and laughter sounded on the quarterdeck and steam swirled, coal barges stood at the bow of the ship, and sometimes the sounds of music were drowned out by the roar of coal winches. Dancing and coal rush were separated only by a canvas body kit.

"Most of the guests," Senior Lieutenant Aust recalls in his diary, "consisted of young ladies, American and Spanish. Politics was the main topic of conversation that day at the Karlsruhe, something that doesn't often happen at balls. The situation was considered by all to be very serious. Everyone was convinced that the Karlsruhe from Havana would go straight into battle. Therefore, the ladies wrote down our names on cards and fans in order to remember us later. The commander of the Italian cruiser considered it his duty to send an officer to us to confirm that if he can be useful in anything, then he is at our service.

On July 30, at about 10 am, the Karlsruhe left Havana. At sea, the cruiser was overtaken by a radiogram informing Captain 2nd Rank Koehler that immediately after his departure, the British cruiser Berwick had arrived in Havana. German agents in Havana managed to find out that the Berwick had received the task of keeping a close watch on German warships in the Caribbean. The radiogram also spoke of the further deterioration of the political situation in Europe due to the outbreak of war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia.

The information received forced the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler to abandon the trip to Vera Cruz. Koehler ordered to lay down on the reverse course so that, having passed between the northern coast of Cuba and the southern tip of the Florida peninsula, he would go out into the open ocean, where he would have more room to maneuver in the upcoming battle with the enemy. Having turned around, the Karlsruhe continued to stay close to Havana for some time in order to wait for further developments without losing contact with the local radio station.

At this time, the "Karlsruhe" carried out comprehensive combat exercises, alarms and target practice. In the afternoon, a radiogram arrived, saying that the war could begin at any moment. Captain 2nd rank Koehler studied intelligence information about the deployment of warships of potential opponents.

The English armored cruiser Suffolk, on which the commander of the 4th squadron of British cruisers Admiral Cradock held the flag, was in Vera Cruz. The light cruiser Bristol, leaving Puerto Mexico City, was currently at sea. The Essex armored cruiser was in Canadian waters, the Lancaster of the same type was in Bermuda, and the Glasgow light cruiser (of the Bristol type) was in Rio de Janeiro. In addition, the French armored cruiser Conde was stationed at Vera Cruz, and the second French cruiser Descartes was at Tampico. As for Berwick, it was known that he had recently left Havana, but Koehler was convinced that Berwick would soon return to Havana and from there he would begin the hunt for Karlsruhe.

In the radiograms received from Berlin, only France and Russia were mentioned as specific enemies. Austria-Hungary and, for some reason, Italy were named as allies. The position of England remained unclear. But here, in the Caribbean Sea, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, German sailors, observing the behavior of British ships, already understood that in the event of a war between Germany and France and Russia, there was no doubt about the position of England. She will not hesitate to oppose Germany.

I

On August 1, 1914, the Karlsruhe radio station issued a mobilization order. Among other orders and instructions was an instruction to the Dresden to remain in the Atlantic for cruising warfare. The dreams of his sailors about an early return to their homeland remained unfulfilled.

Captain 2nd rank Koehler, having built the Karlsruhe crew on the forecastle, read out the mobilization order and briefly explained the political situation in Europe. The sailors listened to the commander with intense attention and silently dispersed. Then they began to gather in groups of several people, discussing what they had heard from the commander. Many still hoped that things would not come to war yet. And those who were sure of the opposite had little idea of what this war would be like, which was destined to flood all of Europe with blood and blow up the whole world. There has never been an analogue of such a war.

Poorly imagined the future and the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler, although he no longer doubted the inevitability of war. In an encrypted radiogram through the German naval attache in Washington, Koehler ordered the German passenger liner Kronprinz Wilhelm, owned by the Hamburg-American Steamship Company, to rendezvous with the Karlsruhe to the Bahamas.

"The declaration of war on Russia," Senior Lieutenant Aust wrote in his diary on August 2, 1914, "caught us at a place memorable for all German sailors: here in 1870 the German Meteor and the French Bouvet had a battle that ended in the deplorable flight of the strongest Frenchman to Havana. This memory was a good omen for us.

At the end of a short service, late in the evening, the commander informed the team about the declaration of war on Russia and the entry into force of martial law. That night, the sailors remained on deck for a very long time, discussing louder or quieter, depending on

temperament, past events.

Of course, the war with Russia has not yet affected our position in any way. What could we do against Russia here, where there was not a single Russian ship? But everyone was sure that war with France would begin very soon. France will never miss the opportunity, together with her heroic friend Russia, to attack us and, finally, quench the thirst for revenge.

But what will England do? This was the most important issue for us. It was to be expected and hoped that its resolution would come, perhaps soon.

August 3rd.

The break with France, which has become known to us today, did not cause any particular excitement of the team. Everyone expected this. It made no difference in our situation. Of course, the enemy was now in close proximity, and we had quite definite tasks regarding his ships and strongholds, but still the question of England's intentions remained open. If she remains with us in peace, then it will be very embarrassing for us in our enterprises against the French and, in general, will interfere with our actions. The commander was sure that a declaration of war by England would be a matter of a few hours. Since he was forced to wait, he wanted to use this time to approach the English trade routes, in order to be ready, upon the declaration of war by England, to fulfill his task - to harm the enemy's trade. So he went north to the Straits of Florida."

The British, whose position so alarmed the sailors of the Karlsruhe, also looked forward to the declaration of war.

The British Admiralty was most worried at that moment in the ports of the United States of America, which were full of German commercial and passenger steamers, which the Germans could easily convert into auxiliary cruisers and threaten English maritime trade on the most important routes from Canada and North America. On July 27, the commander of the 4th cruiser squadron, Englishman Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock, received a warning radiogram from the Admiralty about the possible outbreak of war with Germany and the need to start tracking German cruisers in this regard in order to quickly and effectively destroy them upon declaration of war.

There were no more German cruisers off the coast of Mexico. It was known that the Dresden arrived on July 25 in Port-au-Prince, and the Karlsruhe left somewhere in an unknown direction. The admiral ordered the armored cruiser Berwick to go to Jamaica and from there keep track of the Dresden. The Essex was sent to Bermuda to link up with the Lancaster docked there and sail north and watch the trade routes from New York. Admiral Cradock himself, with the Suffolk and Bristol, remained in the Vera Cruz roadstead, awaiting further developments.

On July 29, it became known about the arrival of Karlsruhe in Havana. "Berwick" rushed there at full speed, but was late: "Karlsruhe" managed to leave in an unknown direction. Not finding "Karlsruhe" in Havana, "Berwick" headed for the Strait of Florida, considering this place the most likely to meet with the enemy. About "Dresden" at that time it was only known that on July 28 he left Port-au-Prince. Within a few days, as war became more and more inevitable, fears for the North Atlantic lines of communication began to rise rapidly!

The Admiralty was especially concerned about the New York area. As always under such circumstances, something like a panic began. A British radio station in Newfoundland reported that the Dresden and Karlsruhe were cruising near New York. About

it was reported by all British stations from New York to Buenos Aires. On the night of August 2-3, Admiral Cradock arrived in Jamaica, where he received an order from the Admiralty to send the cruiser Bristol to Newfoundland.

All this time, the Berwick was cruising in the Strait of Florida, receiving data on the proximity of the Karlsruhe, whose radio station worked without ceasing. Having received a message from the encountered English steamer that it had departed from the Karlsruhe at dawn, the Berwick began to inspect the anchorage near the Great Isaac lightship at the junction of the Providence Canal with the Florida Canal. On the same day, Admiral Cradock received instructions from the Admiralty that the area of New York should be considered the most dangerous area of \u200b\u200bhis station, and that British steamship companies were advised not to release steamers into the sea until the arrival of his cruisers. Only the cruiser Essex was in the New York area, and Admiral Cradock on the Suffolk went north to her aid.

On August 4, at 13:30, Admiral Cradock received a radio message announcing England's declaration of war on Germany. Almost simultaneously, he received verified information from the Admiralty that the Dresden was near New York. (In fact, the Dresden at that moment was passing the mouth of the Amazon, aiming south to join the squadron of Admiral Spee.)

Captain 2nd Rank Koehler on the Karlsruhe received notice of the outbreak of war a few hours ahead of Admiral Cradock. The cruiser stood in a secluded bay 400 miles southeast of the place where the Berwick was looking for her. Koehler immediately took the Karlsruhe out of the bay, heading north.

"After noon, the solution of the issue finally came: England declared war on Germany," Senior Lieutenant Aust wrote in his diary of August 4. "Now we knew what we should do. The wait, which became more painful with each passing hour, was over. Our hands were now untied, and everyone had high hopes for the coming days. It is not easy to convey the mood prevailing on our ship. The number of enemies of our Fatherland was very large, and, naturally, many thought with alarm about their families left at home. These thoughts could easily be read on the thoughtful, sad faces of our sailors."

On August 5, at about 07:00, the signalmen of the Karlsruhe discovered a steamer on the horizon. Raising the signal "Stop!", "Karlsruhe" went to rendezvous with the discovered vessel. The steamer turned out to be an Italian one called Mondibello, sailing in ballast from Messina to Galveston. There was no radio station on the ship, and the captain of the Mondibello knew nothing of the events that had taken place in the world in the past two weeks. When the commander of the prize team sent from Karlsruhe, Lieutenant Schroeder, informed the captain that the war had begun, the Italian captain was terribly surprised. He was even more surprised to learn that Italy had declared its neutrality, and with purely Italian emotionality, he began to assure Lieutenant Schroeder that such behavior of his country was completely incomprehensible, and he was convinced that Italy would soon take the side of Germany. Lieutenant Schroeder, making sure that the ship was really Italian and that all its papers were in order, allowed the Mondibello to proceed.

Having released the Italian steamer, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler sent an encrypted radiogram to the German passenger steamer Kronprinz Wilhelm, which had left New York, informing it of a new rendezvous point and demanding to follow it at full speed. Koehler planned to turn the ship into an auxiliary cruiser, transferring guns and gunners to it. Köhler also hoped to replenish coal reserves from the Crown Prince Wilhelm. The meeting with him was planned for the next day. With the armament of this steamer, Koehler planned to double his own forces in this region for cruising warfare.

At the Karlsruhe, preparations immediately began for arming the Crown Prince Wilhelm, on

which was planned to transfer two 88-mm guns, rifles, a stock of shells and cartridges, as well as sailors of various specialties, led by the Karlsruhe navigation officer Lieutenant Commander Tierfelder, who was to become the commander of the new auxiliary cruiser. The encryption sent by Koehler to the Kronprinz Wilhelm was intercepted by the radio operators of the English cruiser Berwick, which was searching for the Karlsruhe. At this point the Berwick was passing by the Providence Canal. The cruiser ciphers understood the meaning of the radiogram, but believed that the Karlsruhe was calling the German liner Friedrich der Grosse, and not the Kronprinz Wilhelm, for a rendezvous. Considering that the Berwick was enough to deal with the Karlsruhe, Admiral Cradock continued his journey north towards Bermuda, following exactly the place where Captain 2nd Rank Koehler appointed a rendezvous for the Crown Prince Wilhelm.

At dawn on August 6, a large steamer was seen from the Karlsruhe directly ahead. Since the ship did not pick up call signs, and the Karlsruhe radio station was constantly receiving radio communications from some English cruiser nearby, Koehler ordered a combat alarm to be played. Soon the oncoming ship put the rudder to the right, got up to the cruiser with a log, after which it was identified as "Kronprinz Wilhelm". "Karlsruhe" approached him, stood at the starboard side of the liner and the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler went there on a boat to talk with the captain. Fifteen minutes later, Koehler returned and brought the Karlsruhe to the port side of the liner, facing southeast. The high side of the liner covered the cruiser from the wind and swell, but the swell was such that both ships were constantly raised and lowered, and only special fenders prevented the sides from hitting each other. Having moored with a lag to the Crown Prince Wilhelm, the Karlsruhe immediately began transferring guns and ammunition to the liner, as well as a motor boat and boats.

The work proceeded at a hectic pace. Bands played on both ships to cheer up the crews.

Suddenly, at 10:15 a.m., signalmen from the Karlsruhe's "crow's nest" reported that a plume of smoke had appeared in the southwest. Soon, two masts, three chimneys and a high superstructure of a warship rose above the horizon, in which they unmistakably identified the English armored cruiser Suffolk, sailing under the admiral's flag. The English cruiser was heading northeast, apparently not noticing the Karlsruhe and the Crown Prince Wilhelm. But when his bridge rose above the horizon, he turned straight towards the German ships.

For Admiral Cradock, who held the flag on the Suffolk, this meeting was unexpected. "At 11 o'clock in the morning," the admiral reported in his report, "the Karlsruhe was seen 120 miles northeast of Watling Island, loading coal from the Kronprinz Wilhelm, the last German steamer that left New York before the declaration of war .

Noticing the Suffolk, the German ships immediately dispersed. "Kronprinz" rushed to leave to the northeast, and "Karlsruhe" - to the north. The Suffolk began pursuing the Karlsruhe, radioing the Bristol to go to the enemy's crossroads and ordering the Berwick to join in the chase. The Karlsruhe was a knot faster than the Suffolk, so Cradock understood that the chase would be long, but he hoped for the Bristol. In case the German cruiser tried to turn and escape through the Caicos Passage, the admiral assigned the Berwick a rendezvous 60 miles northeast of Mariguana Island.

"As soon as the enemy was identified in the ship that appeared," recalls Senior Lieutenant Aust, "work on our ships was immediately stopped by order of the commander. shouts of cheers and the sounds of an orchestra. Behind the stern of the Kronprinz Wilhelm, our motor launch and command gig jumped in a long tow. The Kronprinz Wilhelm headed north-northeast, the Karlsruhe - northwest, and we soon lost sight of each other, and we were glad that we had

convert the liner into an auxiliary cruiser, having received three reserve officers from it. The Englishman decided to pursue the "Karlsruhe", which was extremely useful for the "Crown Prince Wilhelm", who could safely produce the final armament, installation of guns, etc. The English admiral believed that we had appointed a rendezvous for the liner to receive coal from it and, thinking that we had interfered with this loading, decided that we would not go far. The enemy cruiser was moving at a speed of no more than 19 knots. "Karlsruhe", giving 21 knots, soon left the chase. But the air was so clear that until 4 pm we could see a vertical column of smoke from an enemy cruiser. At the Karlsruhe, the mood was upbeat. Everyone was glad that they had succeeded in arming the Kronprinz, foreseeing that the British would still have to chase him great.

Of course, the fact that we were running away from a British cruiser was not very pleasant, but everyone understood that it would be completely pointless to engage in a battle with a ship superior to us in all respects, except for speed. In addition, our main task was to fight the enemy's sea trade, and not sea battles with his cruisers ... "

Admiral Cradock claims that he missed the Karlsruhe only at night, when the German cruiser had gone so far ahead that she was out of sight. However, the Karlsruhe was soon discovered by the light cruiser Bristol, which the Suffolk aimed at the enemy. Approximately at 20:15 from the "Bristol" they found a German cruiser at 3.5 points to the right of the bow. The Karlsruhe was heading north, being 6 miles from the English cruiser and seemingly not noticing it. The moon was full, giving good visibility. The Bristol turned 7 points to port, preparing to open fire with her starboard side. The distance to the enemy was rapidly decreasing, and when it reached 35 cab., "Bristol" fired the first volley. The Karlsruhe responded immediately and, turning quickly to the east, left the Bristol at her stern.

For some time, both cruisers, illuminated by the moon, went in parallel courses. The advantage of Karlsruhe in speed quickly began to affect - the distance was steadily increasing. Suddenly, the German cruiser turned to the left, leaving the Bristol under her nose. The English cruiser changed course to the northeast, but after a few minutes the Karlsruhe turned sharply to the southeast and disappeared into her own smoke. Soon there was an accident in the car on the Bristol, the speed dropped to 18 knots and at 22:30 the German cruiser disappeared.

"At about 19:40," Senior Lieutenant Aust noted in his diary, "a ship appeared on the left beam of the Karlsruhe, moving with closed lights to the intersection of our course. The distance was about 6000 meters. a long, low ship with at least three funnels. We immediately identified it as our old friend from Puerto Mexico, the English light cruiser Bristol. The enemy opened fire, to which we immediately responded. About an hour, both ships, bringing the speed to 25 knots ", went in parallel courses and exchanged volleys, trying to take the most advantageous position. After 8 o'clock in the evening, the Bristol, initially holding on to our beam, began to suddenly lag behind. Her fire weakened, and then stopped altogether. As she was covered with a thick cloud of our smoke, then we ceased fire.

The commander did not want to get involved in a night battle with all its unforeseen accidents. In addition, we knew that the English armored cruisers Lancaster and Essex were to the north of us, and the Suffolk and Berwick were chasing us from the south. We heard well how the Suffolk aimed the Bristol at us. Therefore, in fighting, we could not help but reckon with the possibility that one, and that several, British armored cruisers would approach the battlefield. Then, on the third day of the war, our activities could be considered completed, although we have not yet begun this activity.

"Karlsruhe" during this short battle did not receive any damage, although the volleys of "Bristol" lay very close. There were also no hits on the enemy."

One of the reasons why the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler considered it good to get out of the battle as soon as possible was the huge overexpenditure of coal in full speed mode during combat maneuvering. So much coal was used up that there was no choice but to go to some neutral port and try to load the coal there. This could best be done in one of the ports on the east coast of the United States, but there was a chance of running into one of the British armored cruisers, which threatened the Karlsruhe with death, especially if the enemy managed to cut off the German cruiser from the coast. On reflection, Koehler decided to go to Puerto Rico and replenish the supply of coal there. It was not necessary to hope that the enemy would not notice a change in the course of the Karlsruhe on such a bright night. It was not known whether the British were continuing the pursuit or not. The commander and most of the officers remained on the bridge all night. The sailors slept in their places on combat alert. The stroke was reduced to 16 knots.

In the morning, everyone expected the resumption of the battle. Dozens of eyes anxiously scanned the horizon - in what part of it would columns of smoke from the chimneys of British cruisers appear? As the day dawned, tension grew at the Karlsruhe. When it was completely dawn and the sun rose, many refused to believe their eyes - the enemy was nowhere to be seen. Koehler ordered the speed to be reduced to 12 knots and gave the command: "Move away!"

The supply of coal was melting, and it was possible to reach Puerto Rico only by an economical 12-knot move. The situation was very dangerous. In the event of the appearance of the enemy, the cruiser could no longer use its main weapon - speed. At about 7 o'clock in the morning, they reported from the radio room that they could clearly hear the negotiations of some English cruiser, which was very close and, apparently, on a converging course. The situation could already be considered critical. Karlsruhe could no longer increase speed or change course due to a lack of coal. Koehler thought it was "Suffolk". They waited for his appearance every minute, feverishly thinking what to do in this case.

If you increase the speed and flee, then the Karlsruhe risked being left without coal on the high seas, and he would only have to flood, transferring the crew to the boats. In the event of a battle, the Suffolk would quickly destroy the Karlsruhe, but at the same time there was a hope of inflicting And he got some damage. Around 10:00 a.m., the audibility of the English cruiser's conversations reached its limit, and then began to weaken. Apparently, the enemy ship crossed the Karlsruhe course over the horizon.

The British ship that was so close to the German raider was, indeed, the Suffolk. When Admiral Cradock had lost sight of the Karlsruhe three hours ago, he had gone east to cut off the German cruiser in case the Bristol forced her to turn south. Knowing the course of the enemy from the Bristol message, the admiral lay down to the south-south-east. In fact, "Suffolk" for some time went with "Karlsruhe" parallel courses; but soon Cradock turned to the south-east, and at dawn - to the east, exactly at the intersection of the enemy's course. (It was at this moment that Captain 2nd Rank Koehler was informed that an English cruiser was nearby, but due to a lack of coal, he could neither increase speed nor evade.) It can be said that the Karlsruhe saved the case: the Suffolk, crossing its course at 9 o'clock in the morning, passed astern of the German cruiser on the verge of the limits of visibility. All the calculations of Admiral Cradock were correct, but luck turned out to be on the side of the enemy.

Successfully leaving the Bristol and avoiding the 152-mm guns of the Suffolk by the will of Providence, the Karlsruhe continued to go at a 12-knot course in Puerto Rico. The ocean was completely deserted. Soon, however, in the Karlsruhe radio room, they heard the radio communications of the Berwick, which was going to Jamaica to be loaded with coal. Upon receiving Admiral Cradock's radio message, the Berwick immediately turned to the northeast from Windwarth Passage. At Karlsruhe, the hassle began again. Radio "Berwick" - was heard more and more clearly, and the German cruiser again relied on a lucky break. And happiness did not change him. At the moment when the meeting with the Berwick seemed inevitable, the radio began to be heard more and more weakly, as the Berwick,

almost having already reached the visibility of the Karlsruhe, he turned west, deciding to look for the German cruiser in the area of the Bahamas. Why is unknown.

"We all breathed a sigh of relief," recalls Senior Lieutenant Aust. "Everyone was already expecting the end and inglorious death, even without consolation that the death was not in vain. The commander was outwardly calm, but it was clear to everyone that this day, August 7, was for him, perhaps the hardest in life. Since the battle with the Bristol, the commander did not leave the bridge, and we could hardly persuade him to take a few hours of sleep in the wicker chair that we brought to the bridge.

The team worked tirelessly. It was divided into two sections and reloaded coal in coal pits closer to the boilers. The heat was so terrible that they worked completely naked and rested on the tank in the same form, black as negroes. To protect from the sun, an awning was stretched on the forecastle.

At dawn on August 9, the Karlsruhe entered the harbor of the port of San Juan de Puerto Rico. It was Sunday, and dead silence reigned on the shore. The steamer of the Hamburg-American line "Odenwald" was in the port, from which Koehler hoped to receive coal. But the ship was empty. Its captain offered to supply the Karlsruhe with provisions and transferred 13 volunteers and 5 spares from his crew to the cruiser. Such an increase in the crew was very helpful.

Captain 2nd rank Koehler immediately went ashore to look for the German consul. The German consul, like all self-respecting people, lived in his country villa on the other side of a very picturesque bay. Since it was a Sunday, the consul could hardly be found by phone. Having learned what was the matter, he quickly rushed to the port and energetically began to organize all the work related to the supply of Karlsruhe with coal, water and food.

Already at 9 o'clock in the morning, a barge with 550 tons of coal approached the starboard side of the Karlsruhe, and another barge with 250 tons approached the port side. The coal that belonged to some American was of very low quality, almost coal dust. Loading went very slowly, there was a debilitating heat, the team was tired after the campaign, so that in four hours of work it was possible to take only 300 tons of coal. The consul and his staff searched the entire port, but could not find any other coal. The entire crew of the Odenwald steamer voluntarily came to the aid of the Karlsruhe sailors during loading and only late in the evening went back to their ship in boats.

In Sao Juan there were English and French consulates, which had a cable connection with the metropolises and with all the islands of the Caribbean. In addition, the port had a powerful American radiotelegraph station, which, although it declared its neutrality, informed someone for half a day about the Karlsruhe's arrival in the port.

Under such conditions, no one would be surprised by the approach of the British cruisers to São Juan.

By 19:00, the loading of coal on the Karlsruhe was completed. 500 tons were accepted, which should have been enough to move to another neutral port. Shortly before dark, the news that had been expected all day was received: two English armored cruisers were approaching the island at full speed. For some reason, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler doubted this, although the overwhelming majority of the crew were only surprised: why did the British arrive so late? Koehler himself climbed into the "crow's nest" on the foremast. For several minutes, he and the signalers scanned the horizon with binoculars. It was completely clean: no haze, no vessel, no ship. The Karlsruhe commander's doubts were caused by the fact that the English cruisers that were chasing him on the way to San Juan de Puerto Rico should also have already dispersed to their bases for loading coal, but disregard the received message



was completely impossible. There was still a chance of meeting the British when leaving the port.

With the onset of darkness, the Karlsruhe slipped out of San Juan without lights. It was pouring with tropical rain, and the sea was so pitch dark that after a few minutes it was impossible to make out the lights of São João. In such impenetrable darkness, the British could pass next to the Karlsruhe, but not notice it. Coming out of San Juan, the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler led the ship under the very shore to the east. The rain continued until 21:00, then the sky cleared, the moon rose. Again it became as bright as day, which happens only in the tropics.

At 22:00, the Karlsruhe passed the traverse of the lighthouse on Cape San Juan in the northeastern part of the island, and the commander ordered to go south, intending to slip through very narrow and a difficult navigational fairway through the strait in the eastern part of the island. The fairway was so dangerous that Kohler would hardly have risked entering the strait if the night had not been so bright and clear. Koehler decided to go to Curaçao, where he would load up on coal. On the ship, meanwhile, there was a regular service, the team was given the opportunity to rest. At the same time, 13 volunteers who came from the Odenwald steamer were sworn in.

Meanwhile, having no exact information about the whereabouts of the Karlsruhe, Admiral Cradock, fearing for the safety of the North Atlantic routes, hastened to Bermuda, capturing the German tanker Leda along the way. In Bermuda, the British admiral found two French cruisers and learned that the French government on the second day of the war canceled the order to return both cruisers to their homeland, placing them at the disposal of the British.

This freed Cradock's hands in the south. Now, to monitor the Gulf of Mexico, he could assign the Conde, providing him with a base in Jamaica, and to monitor the Caribbean Sea - Descartes with a base in Santa Lucia. Cradock himself, who believed that the Karlsruhe had gone north, hurried to take the place of the Bristol near New York. In addition, a message was received from Canada about the appearance of a German cruiser in the Cabot Strait, where the patrol cruiser Lancaster had left to replenish coal reserves. And "Karlsruhe" at dawn on August 12 came to the Dutch port of Wilemstad on the island of Curaçao.

Nobody at Karlsruhe really knew anything about the position taken by Holland in the outbreak of the war. There were various rumors, but the true state of affairs was unknown. It was not excluded that, having come to Wilemstad, the Karlsruhe would find enemy ships there. Just in case, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler ordered everyone to take their places according to the combat schedule. When the cruiser appeared, some kind of signal was raised on the signal mast of the port, which they could not read on the Karlsruhe. Horns began to play, the garrison was raised "in the gun." Guns were dragged somewhere along the embankment. Gun muzzles protruded from the cliffs everywhere. Captain 2nd rank Koehler, demonstrating peaceful intentions, raised the pilot's flag, but, apparently, no one paid any attention to this.

Finally, after a long and rather nervous wait, a steam launch emerged from the narrow entrance to the harbor, heading towards the cruiser. Koehler ordered the gunners to move away from the guns and cover the fenders of the first shots. Together with the pilot on the Karlsruhe, the commander of the coastal defense battleship Jacob van Heemskerk, Commodore of the Dutch fleet Goenen, who concurrently commanded the local colonial squadron, which included another coastal defense battleship Kortenaer, arrived.

The Dutch officer spoke fluent German and was very amiable. He promised Koehler coal, but honestly warned the commander of the Karlsruhe that at any moment a message could come about a war between Germany and Holland. All cable communications are in British hands, the commodore explained, there has been no connection with the mother country for several days. The governor of the colony is completely bewildered by the English reports and in great alarm.

waiting for news of the outbreak of hostilities. The appearance of "Karlsruhe" was perceived as the beginning of the German war against Holland. Everyone believed that the cruiser had arrived to bombard the port. Koehler managed to convince Commodore Goenen of his absolutely peaceful intentions, and the Karlsruhe was allowed to enter the port. However, the face of the commander of the Dutch squadron remained very worried.

"Wilemstad has such a clean and European appearance that it seems as if you are in Holland," the tireless chronicler Senior Lieutenant Aust noted in his diary. - Only a lot of blacks on the shore destroy this illusion. In the midst of this picture of the deepest peace and tranquility, which was not in the least spoiled by medieval forts on the coast, we were all strongly impressed with their militancy by two coastal defense ironclads: the Jakob van Heemskerk and the Kortenaer, standing on both sides of the narrow gates of the harbor. The barrels of their large guns were aimed straight at the passage and looked menacingly at us. Both battleships were ready to weigh anchor and immediately join the battle. We even felt embarrassed."

The Karlsruhe approached the embankment of the Maduro & S. company, the owner of which acted as the Austrian consul on the island. Shortly after the "Karlsruhe" stood at the moorings, the commanders of both battleships came to visit her. Captain 2nd Rank Koehler and Senior Lieutenant Aust knew the commander of the Kortenaer Captain 1st Rank Van der Waal well from the time of the unrest in Mexico, when Koehler commanded the Dresden. Van der Waal immediately recognized Koehler, and the meeting turned out to be very cordial. Dutch officers arrived on board the Karlsruhe on behalf of the governor to report that there would be no obstacles in obtaining coal, and 1200 tons would be released to the German cruiser. In addition, the Dutch tried to convince Koehler, if they received news of the outbreak of war between Holland and Germany, to quietly and peacefully disarm in this Dutch port. Koehler answered this evasively, and the Dutch did not particularly insist.

Later, the commander of the Karlsruhe moved ashore to pay a visit to the governor. The governor knew about the invasion of German troops in Belgium and feared that after Belgium, the turn of Holland would come. Koehler, knowing a little about the pre-war plans of the land command, tried to dissuade him of this. The governor complained to Koehler about the English and French consuls, who intercepted all communications from Europe, and made a lot of demands on him. Today, a demand has already been received to immediately detain the Karlsruhe in the harbor.

At 08:00 on "Karlsruhe" began loading coal. Unlike Puerto Rican coal, it was of high quality, and its means of supply were not as primitive as in San Juan. So by 19:00 we managed to take 1200 tons. In the midst of loading coal, a Peruvian destroyer came to the port. Immediately, a rumor began to circulate around the port: the destroyer was not Peruvian, but French, and he arrived at the port to torpedo the Karlsruhe. Then again reports began to come in that British cruisers approached the entrance to Wilemstad. Almost simultaneously with the Karlsruhe, two steamers approached the port entrance. One managed to enter the harbor before the Karlsruhe. It was the American freighter Philadelphia. The second was the German steamship Stadt Schleswig, which belonged to the shipping company G.Z.Zorn.

The steamer endured several unpleasant moments, because on it they mistook the Karlsruhe for an Englishman. Having found out that the cruiser was German, the captain of this ship, which was sailing without cargo to Mexico, put his ship at the full disposal of Captain 2nd Rank Koehler. The team of the Stadt Schleswig came to the aid of the sailors of the cruiser when loading coal. The American steamship Philadelphia came from Caracas. Among its passengers were many Germans returning to their homeland, including several army reserve officers. The reserves also arrived at the Karlsruhe, asking to be assigned to the crew. However, Koehler refused the army storerooms, because they did not understand anything in the maritime business. The German colony and the Maduro firm sent cigars and Curacao liqueur as a gift to the cruiser. The liquor was of the same disgusting quality as cigars with a similar

title produced in Germany.

While the Karlsruhe was loading coal, someone on the shore managed to issue an "emergency issue" of some local newspaper. It talked, of course, about the German invasion of Holland, about the heroic struggle of the Dutch army, which, however, was crushed by the "Teutonic military machine." The atrocities of the German soldiers were especially depicted.

The completely bewildered governor, fortunately for the crew of the Karlsruhe, did not react to this fake in any way, waiting for official messages. Standing under the muzzles of the guns of the Dutch coastal defense battleships and hearing the cries of newspapermen who distributed the "emergency issue", mainly in the port, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler considered it good to get out of Wilemstad immediately after loading. He also didn't know if the "emergency release" message was fake or not. Shortly before 20:00, the Karlsruhe left Wilemstad, accompanied by the waves of hands and caps of the sailors of the Stadt Schleswig and the Germans - passengers from the Philadelphia.

## II

The Karlsruhe moved slowly along the coast of Venezuela, heading east, searching for enemy merchant ships on their way from Caracas and to Caracas. So far, no one has come across, but on the cruiser they listened with pleasure to the latest news, which was regularly broadcast on the air by an English radio station in Trinidad. This was the first information on the basis of which the crew of the cruiser could roughly imagine the situation in Europe at the end of the second week of the war.

On the cruiser they learned that during this time the German army managed to pass through Belgium and yesterday occupied the city of Lyttich. On the eastern front, the Russians invaded Prussia and launched an offensive against Austria-Hungary. I did not want to believe in this, and therefore they decided that the message about Russian successes was an invention of the British. Off-duty officers sat in the wardroom, studying a map of the Atlantic Ocean. Everyone, according to senior lieutenant Aust, wanted to be admiral-strategists. In the morning and in the afternoon, short exercises were conducted on the cruiser. On the night of August 17-18, the Karlsruhe communications officer, Senior Lieutenant von Algaus, reported to Koehler that radio contact had been established with the steamer Patagonia of the Hamburg-American line. The ship reported that it had a cargo of coal for the Karlsruhe.

"When the next day at dawn we saw the ship," recalls Senior Lieutenant Aust, "we were even more delighted with it than at the time of the Crown Prince Wilhelm. First, the steamer was moving towards us in the wake, then the engines were stalled, and the captain of the Patagonia, Koldewey, arrived on the cruiser. His meeting with our commander, whom he had known for a long time, was extremely cordial. Captain Koldewey was known as an extremely capable and enterprising person.

Karlsruhe and Patagonia went south together. Koehler took the opportunity to conduct gunnery exercises to determine the distance to the "Patagonia" using steamboat as a learning target. Around 16:00, signalmen reported that smoke was visible directly ahead. The cruiser sounded a combat alarm. Soon the signalmen reported that a single-pipe steamer had appeared on the horizon. Karlsruhe stepped up their pace, ordering Patagonia to follow in ability.

"The news of our first hunt spread like lightning throughout the ship," Aust recalls. "Everyone who was not busy serving below poured out onto the upper deck.

Mile the tension grew. On the Patagonia, which hurried after us as best it could, raising a high surf up its bow, the number of heads peeping through the gunwale also increased, and Captain Koldewey could not deny himself the pleasure of semaphoring us: "I'm sure it's an Englishman!" .

Gradually it was possible to distinguish first a red pipe with a black mark, then the gray hull of the ship. At a great distance, the ship raised its flag. The spyglass on the "tower", through which three people wanted to look at once, because she was the best on the whole cruiser, she immediately determined that this was a bright red English commercial flag. Everyone was wildly excited."

August 18, 1914 at 16:40 at point 9 gr. 54 min. US and 50 gr. 10 min. ZD "Karlsruhe" delayed its first prize, raising a signal to him: "Stop the car; wait for the boat."

For greater importance, one blank shot was fired from the bow gun. The prize team, consisting of two officers, a foreman radio operator and a "prize" clerk, headed for the English steamer on a steam launch. The officers and crew of the boat were armed, the radio operator and the clerk were not. The Bowes Castle steamer, owned by the James Chambers Company of Liverpool, sailed from the Chilean port of Antofagasta to the Antilles with a cargo of saltpeter and powdered silver. His team consisted mainly of Englishmen. They were given enough time to pack their belongings, and then they were transferred to the Patagonia. There was no way to save the ship as a prize, and the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler decided to sink it. The Bowes Castle was a brand new steamship making its first ocean voyage. The order on it was maintained exemplary, and on the occasion of the first return home, the ship was repainted. The Scottish captain was brought with the ship's papers to the cruiser. He was somewhat embarrassed.

Knowing about the beginning of the war between Great Britain and Germany, he mistook the Karlsruhe for the English cruiser Glasgow (also four-pipe), also operating in these waters. Senior Lieutenant Aust noted in his diary that after the excitement of the chase had passed, they were very sorry to destroy such a beautiful steamer - a product of modern science, technology and industrial culture. However, all these sentiments were out of habit.

On an English steamer, the kingstones were opened and the flange of the refrigerator pipe was given away. In addition, explosive charges were placed between the boilers and the side. The poorly calculated explosion almost did not damage the side of the ship, but broke through the upper deck. Bowes Castle sank very slowly. In the wardroom they teased the mine officer.

As darkness fell, torrential rain poured down. And without waiting for the Bowes Castle to sink, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler ordered to go south. The Patagonia, like a shadow, followed the wake of the Karlsruhe. On August 19 and 20, both ships sailed along the coast of South America, heading southeast. On August 21, they approached the small island of Maras, located almost at the very mouth of the Amazon, and anchored in one of its deserted bays, moored to each other.

At the Karlsruhe, they began cleaning the boilers and receiving coal from the Patagonia. Just at this point, the dirty yellow waters of the Amazon merged with the pristine blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean. In the afternoon, the course of the great river suddenly intensified, swirling in some incomprehensible reverse currents and whirlpools. The Karlsruhe and the Patagonia began to drift, and then they were separated from each other. Having raised the anchor, the cruiser changed its place, standing at a shallower depth. He began to drift several more times until he found a place where the current was relatively weak, and anchored there. The loading of coal continued for the next two days. It was possible to fill all the bunkers and take 120 tons of coal onto the deck.

Pirogues with natives constantly rushed past the ships, their sailing boats darted around. Koehler ordered that the name "Karlsruhe" on the stern be covered with a tarpaulin.

August 24 "Karlsruhe" and "Patagonia" left the Amazon Delta and August 25 crossed the equator. For a long time there was a controversy on the cruiser whether the transition of the equator would be celebrated according to naval traditions, although with some restrictions due to wartime. Captain 2nd rank Koehler was inclined to allow the ceremony in order to somehow brighten up the monotonous and hard life of the crew, who had seen nothing but exercises and loading coal. However, the sailors themselves asked the commander to postpone the holiday of Neptune until the time when the Karlsruhe would pass the equator in the opposite direction, returning home. Everyone on the cruiser, including officers, was sure that the war would not last long - three months. The first month has already passed, which means that there are two left, three at the most. As you know, not only the Karlsruhe thought so, not yet believing that they had fallen into one of the most terrible, bloody and senseless world cataclysms.

Even while staying in Curaçao, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler agreed with the captain of the steamer Stadt Schleswig Zimmerman that he would lead his ship to the island of Sao Zhao off the coast of Brazil and wait for the cruiser there. "Stadt Schleswig" came to the island the day before, delivering for "Karlsruhe" 800 tons of coal, which he managed to get from the Americans on the island of St. Thomas. Having brought the Stadt Schleswig to the board, the Karlsruhe reloaded from it the amount of coal that the cruiser used up during the transition to this Brazilian island. The rest of the stock of coal from the Schleswig Stadt was reloaded to the Patagonia. The Stadt Schleswig was too slow to follow the Karlsruhe. Therefore, the crew of the sunken British steamship Bowes Castle was transferred to it, ordering the captain of the Schleswig to land the British in Maranhao.

The British were quiet, and there was no fear that they would suddenly rebel.

August 26 "Karlsruhe" left Sao Zhao and went to the ocean. After some thought, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler chose an area in the northeastern part of South America for the cruiser's combat activities. Important shipping lines crossed there: from Europe through the Canary Islands and the Cape Verde Islands to South America, from North America and the West Indies to South America. At the point of intersection of these routes, considering it the most favorable for waging war against enemy shipping, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler sent his cruiser.

Koehler wanted to approach this place with fully loaded coal pits, for which it was necessary to once again choose a secluded place for loading coal. Meanwhile, on August 27, the radio operators of the Karlsruhe intercepted close signals from the British cruiser Glasgow, which was talking to some other ship, also nearby.

On August 30 at 11:00, the Karlsruhe anchored off the reefs of Lavandeira and immediately began loading coal from the Patagonia. Having received 350 tons of coal by 19:00, Karlsruhe headed northeast to the intended area of corsair activity. The area defined by Captain 2nd Rank Koehler had an area of 100,000 square miles. Its center was at 5 degrees south latitude and between 29-36 degrees west longitude.

Of course, the implementation of Koehler's plan depended to a large extent on the degree of opposition to his operations on the part of British warships. At the same time, Koehler could only rely on the high speed of Karlsruhe. At night, the radio operators of the cruiser heard the negotiations of some ships, conducted in German. It was hard to believe, although some radio stations broadcasting from the territories of Latin American countries spoke German. But they were very low power, and their messages were difficult to catch. And here the German speech sounded loud and clear on the air. There was no doubt that the negotiations were conducted by German ships, which was equally important and pleasant.

The signalmen kept their eyes on the horizon. Finally, when the rocky island of Rokas opened on the horizon, the signalmen reported two steamers that appeared right on the bow. One was to the right, the other to the left of the Karlsruhe. The cruiser raised his call sign and went to approach the steamer that was to the left. Having disassembled the call sign, the steamer also turned towards the Karlsruhe. It was the Asuncion (4663 brt), owned by the Hamburg-South American Shipping Company. Captain Fritsch commanded the ship. The ship sailed from Santos, carrying 1,200 tons of coal, food supplies, and 40,000 French francs in gold for Karlsruhe. The second ship turned out to be the Krefeld (3829 brt), owned by the North German Lloyd, commanded by Captain Fit. The steamer carried the Karlsruhe 1,000 tons of coal, provisions, and 35,000 gold francs in cash. In addition, it became known that another German steamer, the Rir-Negro, coming from Brazil, was on its way.

Three German ships at once! The event was more than joyful, greatly facilitating the cruiser's future operations. Koehler decided to keep all these steamers with him as auxiliary ships. Both ships entered the wake of the Karlsruhe, and the Rio Negro was contacted by radio. The swell in the ocean was so large that the captains of the ships could not arrive at the Karlsruhe for a meeting with the commander. Koehler decided to go with his entire makeshift squadron under the protection of the island of Rakos.

Karlsruhe headed for the island, leading a convoy of four German ships. At 16:00 another ship appeared on the horizon. On the Karlsruhe bridge, at first they decided that it was the Rio Negro, but they were surprised that the steamer made no attempts to get close to the cruiser, although he could not help but recognize him. An unknown ship was asked about the port of registry. He answered in a completely different way than the Rio Negro should have. They decided to check the uninvited guest. "Asuncion" and "Krefeld" were ordered to go to the island of Racos, "Rio Negro" gave a radiogram to follow there, and the "Karlsruhe", accompanied by "Patagonia", went in full swing to rendezvous with an unknown vessel. As the cruiser approached, the steamer raised the English flag. The name "Stratra" was written in large letters on its stern. Glasgow". On the "Karlsruhe" raised the signal "Stop!"

The Stratroy immediately turned in the direction of the cruiser. A large wave made it impossible to send a boat with a prize crew to the intercepted steamer. From the Karlsruhe they asked for a steamer, from where and where does it go, and what is it carrying? After a pause, Stratroy replied: "6,000 tons of coal from Norfolk to Brazil."

6,000 tons of coal - that was more than all four German ships had! It was an unheard of luck that Koehler did not even dare to hope for. The Stratroy was ordered to lower the flag and follow the Karlsruhe. Putting the captured steamer between herself and the Patagonia, the Karlsruhe again headed for the island of Rakos.

September 1 at 08:00 "Karlsruhe", leading the captured "Stratra" and the faithful "Patagonia", came to the assembly point at Rakos. There, along with Asuncion and Krefeld, the Rio Negro was already standing, delivering 1,100 tons of coal, spare parts for the car, provisions and 200 pounds sterling in gold for Karlsruhe. The prize-winning team arrived at Stratroy. It turned out that most of the crew of the English steamer were Chinese. They were offered to stay on the ship, with a slight increase in their salary. The Chinese enthusiastically agreed. The English captain and his officers were taken from the ship, which Koehler had appointed lieutenant commander of the Lubinus reserve, who had previously held the position of senior officer on the Krenfeld steamer, to command. Lieutenant Gundlach from the Asuncion, one engineer, three stokers and 11 sailors from different ships of the Koehler squadron were also transferred to the new coal transport.

On Koehler's orders, the Stratroy raised the war flag. Several American newspapers were found on the captured ship, from which, unfortunately, nothing new could be learned.

They hoped to find out something about the fate of the Dresden, which operated in the South Atlantic, but found nothing.

Koehler feared that the British would take steps to recapture the Stratroy and take away so much coal from it. Therefore, the commander of the Karlsruhe ordered the coal to be divided among the rest of the ships. Somewhere not far away, two English cruisers were talking to each other. Their signals were received by the Karlsruhe radio station clearly and distinctly. Between the "Karlsruhe" and the ships of his "squadron" boats constantly scurried around. Some delivered provisions from Asuncion to the cruiser, others delivered British prisoners from Stratroy to Asuncion, others delivered the captains of all ships to a meeting with the Karlsruhe commander, and, finally, one boat carried mail to Patagonia, which was supposed soon be released to Germany.

By evening, numerous works were completed. "Patagonia" and "Stratroy" weighed anchor and went to sea under the overall command of Captain Koldewey. When both steamers disappeared at dusk, the Karlsruhe and Krefeld also weighed anchor and headed north to the area designated by Koehler for cruiser operations.

On the night of September 2-3, at a distance of several miles on the port side, the lights of a ship were noticed from the Karlsruhe. The cruiser went in full swing to approach and soon discovered the English steamer Maple Branch (4338 bрт), sailing from Liverpool to Valparaiso.

"At dawn, we woke up in our aft cabins from the strong noise of the propellers," recalls Senior Lieutenant Aust. "The machines were working at full speed. Something happened! "We caught up with him at dawn, and he immediately stopped. It was an Englishman - Maple Branch. A prize team was sent to him, who soon reported: "2000 tons of various cargo and live cattle in Valparaiso." We were all delighted with live cattle, which could be a great addition to our diet. What is "miscellaneous cargo", we, being still new to the capture of commercial ships, had no idea. It sounded quite harmless, but in fact it was not so simple.

The ship with "different cargo" is a huge floating store. He carries everything that a country with an underdeveloped industry needs, from hairpins and feathers to sewing machines and samples of the latest Parisian fashions. In addition, such a "store" is always full of food: all kinds of canned food, Dutch cheeses, English marmalade, Norwegian sardines and German smoked sausages.

Each company forwards with its goods a special shipping document, which together makes up a whole bunch of papers, which the captain handed over to our prize officer. The commander attached particular importance to the most accurate drawing up of the prize act. Therefore, such prey did not particularly delight our prize officer. Compiling the act of "different cargoes" required more work than "activating" four steamships with the same cargo. The act had to be drawn up within a few days. But "what a cat has toys, a mouse has tears," says the proverb. Our first mate and his right hand, the boatswain with the skipper, on the other hand, were overjoyed, for there were a lot of typewriters on the ship. They were distributed among combat units - to print reports, and one, as a consolation, was given to a prize officer. From now on, the "prize clerk" could type all acts on a typewriter.

All the dreams of the boatswain and the skipper came true, although the list of their desires was very long: goliks, mops, cleanliness, a cable for fenders (which were extremely necessary during coal loading, when the steamers rubbed hard against us), hammers, chisels, borers of all sizes and etc., but, above all, soap, which we always ran out of quickly, and without it, no one

a German sailor cannot have complete happiness. The navigational officer also received his share of the booty - maps and pipes for Thomson's lot. The commander allowed us to take a few gramophones on the cruiser for our entertainment. Everything that entered the ship went through strict control; each item was recorded in the inventory and evaluated.

The bartender and our cooks were delighted with the veal. All cattle - bulls, rams, pigs, rabbits and poultry - were selected specimens of the best breeds and were excellently fattened, because. intended for an exhibition in Argentina. They had a special cattleman with them, who was promised a monetary reward if the cattle arrived at the place healthy and did not lose their weight. Most of the cattle were slaughtered. The bartender and the cokes had been fiddling with it all day, and the deck looked disgusting after this carnage. The meat was divided between Karlsruhe and Krefeld.

In the afternoon, several boats transported the bird, which had previously been slaughtered. It was several hundred chickens, ducks and turkeys. The commander on this occasion quoted Henry IV: "I wish that every one of my subjects had chicken soup on Sundays." Indeed, his wish came true. The next day was Sunday, and each of the team received a chicken, which he had to pluck with his own hands. It is a funny sight when the whole deck is covered with sailors, each of whom held a chicken between his knees and plucked it diligently. Behind the cruiser was a cloud of feathers. Of course, the cameras worked with might and main. (Unfortunately, all these pictures, like many others, could not be saved)".

Captain 2nd Rank Koehler hoped to find some newspapers on the English ship, but then disappointment awaited him: Maple Branch left England before the start of the war, and those newspapers that could be found on the ship were from July 1914.

The crew of the captured ship consisted of 42 people, of which the majority were Chinese. They were transferred to the Krefeld, which then, out of respect for the English captain and his officers, retreated 10 miles so that the British officers would not see the death of their ship. At Maple Branch, they removed the lid of the refrigerator and opened the kingstones. Explosive cartridges this time were placed in the corridor of the propeller shafts. All doors and manholes were peeled off, so that after the explosion the steamer quickly filled with water and sank by nightfall. When the waves were already covering the stern of the ship, and its bow rose higher and higher above the waves, a fire was suddenly noticed in the bow of the ship. A small commotion began on the Karlsruhe, but in the end it turned out that it was the fire of a lamp, lit by Chinese sailors in front of the Buddha statue. Meanwhile, the Maple Branch, standing upright in the water, quickly sank to the bottom, shining with a Chinese lamp.

The night from 4 to 5 September was bright and clear. In the Karlsruhe radio room, for the first time since the beginning of August, the call signs of Crown Prince Wilhelm were heard. Despite the temptation to "chat with an old friend," "Karlsruhe" behaved "quieter than a mouse" so as not to betray its place by the work of the radio station.

Already at least 11 English ships were scouring around. Their ciphers filled the entire airwaves. The coast station of Olinda near Pernambuco transmitted a short message in Italian to an Italian passenger steamer: "The Germans are in front of Paris, the Russians are in Lvov, Turkey entered the war in alliance with Germany."

The news that German troops were near Paris caused general rejoicing on the Karlsruhe. For a month they knew nothing about the situation in the theater of operations in Europe.

September 5 afternoon "Karlsruhe" met with "Asuncion". It was reported from the ship that



On September 3, they walked all day along with the Crown Prince Wilhelm, on which they reloaded part of the provisions. Lieutenant Commander Tierfelder sent a letter to Captain 2nd Rank Koehler, in which he reported on his activities - very successful, in the general opinion. The Karlsruhe, meanwhile, went west from the Maple Branch wreck, but encountered no one in the deserted ocean.

On September 6, Koehler decided to return to Lavandeira Reef to receive coal from the captured Statroi. Until September 8, coal was loaded. "In the fierce heat, it was terribly exhausting work," recalls Senior Lieutenant Aust. - During the day, the whole team loaded, at night it was divided into two shifts, which worked for four hours. The time of loading was the greatest danger for us. On the high seas, it was not easy to take us by surprise. The pairs were always full, so that the machines could give maximum speed at any time. Needless to say, guns and mines were in full readiness. It was quite different when we moored to the steamer from which we were going to take coal. Combat readiness, of course, was significantly reduced, because, when the enemy appeared, first it was necessary to give up the mooring lines, then it was necessary to hastily remove the coal, which covered the deck with a thick layer, interfering with the free action of the guns. Thus, it took a long time to bring the ship into combat readiness. The situation could be fatal if the enemy approached the coal loading site at night or in cloudy weather, as often happens at dawn. Therefore, at night, all unnecessary lights were extinguished, leaving only the weak illumination of the mouths of coal bunkers. And, of course, on such days, observation of the horizon was intensified, for which the best signalmen were selected.

On September 9, having accepted a full supply of coal, the Karlsruhe again went to sea. ("We are back to our activities as roadside robbers," Aust sneered.) Together with the cruiser, the steamships Krefeld and Rio Negro went into the raid. One carried guard duty from the east of the cruiser, the second - from the west. Saving coal, Koehler often ordered to drift with a stalled car. Time passed slowly and monotonously. Free from service engaged in hunting for sharks. "On the high seas," Aust recalls, "the sharks are not as big as they are off the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. They barely reach two meters in length. It's amazing how quickly these creatures smell where they can profit. It was enough for the cruiser to stop the cars, as in a minute they literally swarmed astern. A hook thrown behind a yurt with a piece of meat strung on it constantly managed to pick up one or the other. The officers were even more successful, who, armed with rifles, fired from the bridge or from the quarter quarters as soon as the shark stuck its head out of the water to grab a piece of meat suspended just above the surface.

Killing sharks and time, the sailors of the Karlsruhe looked with surprise at the desert horizon. Suddenly, a column of smoke will appear there, indicating the approach of another prey. But the horizon was empty.

Only on the night of September 14, from the bridge, they saw the distant lights of a steamer directly ahead. Koehler went to approach, but appeared in the visibility of the steamer only at dawn. Throwing yourself at the lights headlong was also risky - they could well belong to an English cruiser. Already by the black-white-red color of the pipe, it became clear to everyone on the Karlsruhe bridge that the ship was English. Soon he himself confirmed this by raising the British flag. Signal "Stop!" the steamer ignored her, continuing on her course. From the Karlsruhe they fired a warning shot under his nose, and the ship stopped.

The steamer was called the Highland Hope. It belonged to the British Nelson Line and was heading from Liverpool to Argentina for a cargo of frozen meat. The ship had huge refrigerators, and it was supplied with coal so that it could go on a return voyage immediately after loading the meat. In addition, to the great joy of the crew of the Karlsruhe, the English ship was loaded with newspapers and illustrated magazines with reports and photographs.

war correspondents working on various fronts of the flaring great war. The prize officer sent all the newspapers and magazines found to the cruiser, and they were immediately taken away to the wardrooms and cabins. This caused Koehler's displeasure: the newspapers could contain information necessary for the actions of Karlsruhe. In particular, the schedule of shipping lines, the dates of departure from the bases of warships, etc. The commander ordered from now on to deliver the press first of all to the bridge. Reading British newspapers for German sailors cut off from their homeland was far from the most pleasant occupation. They still lived in the ideological conservatism of peacetime, and they were strongly struck by the sharp hatred for Germany and for everything German, which was seen through from every line of British newspapers. "None of us expected such behavior from a people who were famous all over the world for their desire to observe decency and external forms," Senior Lieutenant Aust recalled. "More and more harshness was encountered about the emperor and the crown prince. Terrible things were told about him. Then came the turn of other generals, officers, and, finally, all the soldiers with their atrocities. In fury, we threw the newspapers aside, but after a minute we nevertheless took up them again, because only of them one could learn at least something new. The commander usually cut and pasted together the most false and offensive articles, calling this collection "The Album of Lies."

While the sailors of the Karlsruhe were busy with the detained Highland Hope, a large steamer appeared on the horizon, identifying itself by radio as the Spanish ship *Rena Victoria Elena*, owned by a shipping company in Barcelona. This was confirmed as the steamer drew closer. He sailed under the Spanish postal flag, and the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler decided not to examine him and not to detain him. However, on a Spanish steamer, seeing so many ships assembled; around the warship, began to request by radio; the name of the cruiser, having done this several times and pretty much bored everyone on the Karlsruhe bridge. The cruiser commander ordered to answer in English: "The escort of British ships."

Although this signal was transmitted at the lowest power, some English ship, which was nearby, intercepted it and immediately began to ask the Spanish steamer, what kind of strange "escort" is this, about which he knows nothing? The Spaniard demanded that the Englishman identify himself. He answered, but so "quietly" that the signal was not heard at the Karlsruhe.

The situation became very dangerous. Koehler decided to leave the area immediately and try his luck on the North American lines. Having hastily blown up the Highland Hope, the Karlsruhe with two of its satellites began to leave in a westerly direction.

### III

Captain 2nd rank Koehler, apparently, did not fully realize how much luck accompanied him in daring and risky actions. Even when the Karlsruhe was unloading the captured English steamer *Maple Branch* at sea, Admiral Cradock on the armored cruiser *Good Hope* passed only 50 miles from it, heading to Saint Paul Roque in Pernambuco (an English coal station on the coast of Brazil -

Note. ed. ). The second English armored cruiser, the *Cornwell*, while searching in the ocean, passed only 40 miles from the Karlsruhe when she was sinking the *Maple Branch*. The *Cornwell* was heading straight for the Karlsruhe, but then suddenly turned away, heading for coal in Sierra Leone. Ordered to join Cradock's squadron at Pernambuco, the *Cornwell* once again separated from the Karlsruhe at the very edge of visibility. When is Karlsruhe

took coal from Sfatroy, literally 20 miles from them passed the auxiliary cruiser Karmania. During the capture of the steamer Highland Hope, when the Spanish Rena Victoria-Elena received an answer from the Karlsruhe to its request: "The escort of English ships", this answer was received on the English battleship Canopus, which was approaching this area.

"Canopus" asked the ship to show its place. Sensing danger, the Karlsruhe fled. As a new area of operations, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler chose the shipping lanes between New York and South America, 300 miles from his previous position.

September 15, leaving to the north-west, "Karlsruhe" stumbled upon two sailboats that he had not met since the very beginning of the war. The first was the Norwegian three-masted barque Serfareren, which was sailing from New Caledonia with a cargo of chromium for a Nuremberg firm in Gothenburg. Upon learning of this, Koehler sent half a freshly slaughtered ram and fresh potatoes as a gift to the Norwegians. On the mast of the Karlsruhe, the signal was raised: "Happy sailing." The Norwegians responded in kind, and the ships dispersed. Then another three-masted barque was encountered, also, apparently, Norwegian. The commander of the Karlsruhe decided not to waste time stopping and inspecting it. Meanwhile, the time for the next loading of coal was steadily approaching. Experience has already taught the sailors of the cruiser that it is impossible to go with an incomplete supply of coal. You can always run into a British cruiser, from which you will have to leave for a long time in full speed mode. Under similar circumstances, the Karlsruhe once almost ran out of coal on the high seas and survived then only by a miracle.

So having not met anyone, Koehler was about to leave for loading coal, as the signalmen reported that they saw smoke "in four points to the left of the bow."

It happened at noon. The officers were having lunch, and the report of the appearance of smoke was their dessert. As usual, at first the masts appeared above the horizon, and immediately behind them - the chimney. Then for a long time nothing was added, only the pipe became longer and longer. On the bridge of the Karlsruhe, some suggested that this was an optical illusion caused by refraction. But it turned out that the oncoming steamer indeed had a very high chimney. Seeing the Karlsruhe, the steamer raised the English flag. The steamer was called "Indrani". He shone with cleanliness, as if from a needle. Officers in snow-white tunics stood on the bridge. The Chinese sailors were dressed in neat blue robes. A prize team was sent to the ship. On the Karlsruhe, everyone was sure that they again came across a ship with "different cargo." Therefore, with some surprise, the semaphore from the prize team was read: "6700 tons of coal from Norfolk to Rio de Janeiro." In addition, as it turned out, the Indrani, unlike the Stratroy, had a powerful radio station. One could only dream of such a coal miner!

The English part of the crew was transferred to the Krefeld, and the senior assistant captain of the Rio Negro, lieutenant commander of the reserve Hugo Yallass, was appointed captain of the Indrani. The lieutenant of the reserve Gentschel, two non-commissioned officers and four sailors were also transferred to the new coal miner. All the sailors and stokers-Chinese expressed their desire to stay on the ship for the same money. The German flag was hoisted on the ship, and the new coal transport became part of the squadron of Captain 2nd Rank Koehler.

The commander of the Karlsruhe was in such a good mood about this that he allowed the English captain of the Indrani to keep his favorite hunting rifle with him. As a courtesy in return, the English captain persuaded one of his mechanics "to stay on the ship and help the Germans drive the machine." Many American newspapers were found on the Indrani. "They were better than the English," Senior Lieutenant Aust noted, "mainly in that instead of English hatred of us, they were thoroughly imbued with a desire to make a sensational impression. There were no less lies in them. General fun was caused by an article describing accepted English

Admiralty measures to put an end to the Karlsruhe. The ships sent by the British into the ocean had no right to return before our cruiser was sunk. We have already had to read a lot of different tales about ourselves. We were "sunk" on the day war was declared, then we were "captured" in San Juan, then, according to some English newspaper, again "sunk" somewhere. Later, they took pity on us, writing that the Karlsruhe escaped with "heavy injuries." Now the newspapers reported that four more armored cruisers had come out of England to hunt for us.

Leaving the Rio Negro and Krefeld with the newly captured Indrani, the Karlsruhe and Asuncion headed for the coal loading site. On September 18, in heavy fog, loading began and continued for a whole day, passing, as usual, near the reefs of Lavandeira. The cruiser took 840 tons of coal into the bunkers and another 530 tons into all free spaces, including the upper deck.

On the night of September 19, the Karlsruhe again went to sea, heading for an ambush site north of the island of Fernando Naronha. On September 20, the cruiser met at sea with the Indrani and Krefeld. Captain 2nd rank Koehler ordered the Indrani to be renamed Hofnung, agreed with Lieutenant Commander Yallass about a rendezvous and went on, taking the Rio Negro and Krefeld with him.

This time, "Karlsruhe" had to "sit in ambush" for a very short time. It was barely dawn when a cheerful cry of a signalman from the "crow's nest" was heard about the approach of a steamer going straight to the cruiser. But, when the steamer came closer, on it, with some degree of disappointment, they saw the Dutch (neutral) flag. The ship was called "Maria". It was old, dirty and very rundown. The ship was sailing from Portland in the US state of Oregon with a cargo of 6,000 tons of wheat, bound for Belfast and Dublin. The ship was chartered by the British, and therefore it was decided to sink it. A load of wheat would be enough to feed the entire population of London with bread for two weeks! This was the moral justification for the destruction of a neutral ship.

While the Dutch were being transported to the Krefeld and the Maria was being prepared for the explosion, another steamer appeared on the western horizon, heading south. Leaving the Krefeld to sink the Dutchman, the Karlsruhe pursued new prey.

Even from a great distance it was possible to see that the steamer was sailing under the English merchant flag. The ship was called "Cornish City" and sailed from Bideford with a cargo of 6400 tons of Cardiff coal to Rio de Janeiro for the needs of the Anglo-Brazilian Company, which provides British warships with coal. The ship was old, long overdue for all its resources, very slow. It was impossible to use it as a coal transport, and there were already not enough people for it. In addition, Karlsruhe was supplied with coal in abundance. The idea was to send the Cornish City to supply the Crown Prince Wilhelm with coal. The Dutch captain from the Maria managed to tell that he met the British cruiser Glasgow at sea, which was looking for the Crown Prince Wilhelm, but the Karlsruhe did not know exactly where the auxiliary cruiser was now. Therefore, after some hesitation, the Cornish City was decided to be sunk. The crew, half Chinese and half British, were transferred to the Rio Negro, and then the ship was blown up. He quickly sank. Just at that moment, the Krefeld approached, and the radio operators of the Karlsruhe caught a message that the large English passenger liner Amazon, owned by the British company Royal Steam Mile, was nearby. It was the most valuable booty. The number of signalers was increased, all peered intently at the horizon. Darkness fell: Around 22:00, lights were seen to the east of the cruiser.

In full confidence that it was the Amazon, the Karlsruhe rushed to the discovered lights. However, Koehler did not dare to attack the passenger liner in the middle of the night - on board

be a lot of neutral passengers. The commander of the Karlsruhe decided to postpone the attack until dawn. The night was cloudy, with intermittent showers, and the Karlsruhe's signalmen lost sight of the lights several times.

September 22, when dawn broke, everyone on the bridge of the Karlsruhe was in for a strong disappointment. Ahead of them, heading north, was a small, shabby steamer and, what was most offensive, under the Italian flag. The ship was called Ascaro (port of registry - Genoa) and went with a load of maize from Rosario to St. Vincent to the Cape Verde Islands. Like all Italian ships, Ascaro was dirty and terribly neglected. The prize officer with a shudder told in the wardroom what smells he had to taste there. However, the Italian's papers were in perfect order and he had to be released; "albeit chagrinedly," as Aust commented. The crew of "Karlsruhe" obviously got a taste and, releasing someone, already felt uncomfortable.

However, fate quickly sent down consolation to them. Even when the prize team was engaged in Italians, another steamer appeared in the northwest. Apparently, mistaking the Karlsruhe for one of the British cruisers and wondering why she was going to meet him, the steamer raised a very large and new English flag, transferring it from the stern to the mast. This happened to most of the captured ships. All of them at first mistook the Karlsruhe for an English cruiser. It was only when they saw the German naval ensign that the British captains remembered Germany and the state of war with her. However, they continued to be perplexed, as they were fully convinced that the ocean was entirely controlled by the Royal Navy.

The new counter turned out to be the Rio Iguassu, heading from New Castle to Rio de Janeiro with 4800 tons of coal. The team consisted entirely of British. It was decided to sink the ship. While the prize crew from the Karlsruhe was inspecting the Rio Yguassa, another steamer appeared, heading straight for the cruiser. At a signal from the Karlsruhe, the new steamer approached directly to the side of the cruiser. It turned out to be Swedish - "Princess Ingeborg" - owned by the society "Axel Johnson and Co." in Stockholm. He went with various cargo and passengers, including several German families, to South America. The Swede's papers were quickly checked and he was released. Captain 2nd rank Koehler wanted to reload coal from the captured ship to the cruiser, but this had to be abandoned due to strong swell. In addition, the English captain assured that his coal was of very poor quality. "Rio Iguassa" was blown up by placing demolition charges in the corridor of the propeller shafts and the ram compartment. The ship capsized and quickly sank. As it turned over, a flag suddenly went up on its mast, warning that some signal was ready to be transmitted. There was no one on the ship, but such an accident made a strong impression on superstitious sailors.

Many newspapers were found on the Rio Iguassu. In one of the illustrated magazines, the Karlsruhe sailors found a very good drawing depicting the death of the German cruiser Mainz during the battle in Helgoland Bay on August 28, 1914. In the drawing, the ship was already half under water, but her guns continued to fire on the British. The picture was pasted on cardboard and hung in the sailor's cockpit, providing patriotic explanations. This marked the beginning of the creation on the Karlsruhe of a wall newspaper for sailors, published by officers based on foreign press materials.

#### IV

The Italian steamer Ascaro, on which the prize officer from the Karlsruhe almost died from

smells that prevailed there, upon arrival at St. Vincent in the Cape Verde Islands, he reported a meeting with the Karlsruhe. From him, in fact, the British command learned about the area where the German cruiser operates. The Swedish steamship Princess Ingeborg, having arrived in Buenos Aires, did not report anything about the meeting with the Karlsruhe. The squadron of Admiral Cradock at that time went south, waiting for the approach of the cruisers of Admiral Count Spee. The English cruisers Cornwell, Bristol and Macedonia operated to the north, not descending below Cape San Roquier. So the area chosen by the remarkable intuition of Captain 2nd Rank Koehler for the actions of the cruiser entrusted to him could be considered practically safe.

But Karlsruhe had its own concerns. Since leaving Germany in June 1914, the cruiser has actually been on the move all the time. Periodically, the ship needed to clean the boilers and overhaul the machines. On September 23, Koehler decided to take up preventive maintenance work. "Since the English forces were, apparently, far from us, it was possible to devote several days to these works," Senior Lieutenant Aust noted in his diary. to avoid any unpleasant surprises in the form of the unexpected appearance of enemy cruisers. Due to frequent coal loadings, the cruiser suffered greatly. The paint on board was chipped in many places, and the hull was covered with rust in these places. Only a pitiful memory remained of the linoleum on the upper deck. Senior the officer busied himself with getting the cruiser up and running. Other than that, life went on as usual. The sailors amused themselves by baiting sharks, the officers by shooting them with rifles. In their free time, everyone tried to find a place clean of coal to read or take a nap.

The best thing was, of course, on the command bridge, where it was always clean. Since the quarters and the rest of the upper deck were occupied by coal, the only place above to get a breath of fresh air was the aft superstructure. However, sometimes the wind brought clouds of coal dust there. When the coal was removed from the quarters into the coal pits and a complete tidying up was done, then we began to walk there too, doing muscle strengthening according to Dr. Muller's system, which was absolutely necessary. Our commander also willingly took part in these exercises.

After supper, the crew usually gathered on the forecastle, and the officers on the bridge, to listen to music. When the cruiser left Germany, a lot of work and effort was made to compose a ship's orchestra, and its playing was noticeably different in performance from that of ordinary ship's orchestras.

On Sundays, a short divine service was performed on the quarter quarters, after which music was played on the quarterdeck. Soft drinks and cigarettes were then served on the quarters. During these concerts, the ships accompanying us usually approached, and on the Krefeld one could see a crowd of several dozen people of different nationalities gathered at the rails, attentively listening to the diverse repertoire of our orchestra. For lunch on Sundays and daily for dinner, the commander invited several officers to his place. The conversation, of course, touched on political topics, then turned to the state of affairs at home and ended with memories of our families, from whom we had no news since the end of June. In conclusion, the commander proclaimed a toast to the health of our loved ones.

On September 28, having completed impromptu repairs, Karlsruhe went to a rendezvous with Asuncion to replenish coal reserves. The Asuncion reloaded all the coal from the Stratroy, after which the former English steamer was sunk, and its crew was transported to the Krefeld. On September 29, another "coal holiday" began on the Karlsruhe, as the sailors called the exhausting coal loading. The mood of the crew rose sharply when radio operators from the stream of radio messages caught the news that the French fortress of Maubeuge, besieged by German troops, had capitulated. Four were captured

French general, 40,000 soldiers, 400 guns were captured. There were brief reports about the dashing actions of the Emden cruiser in the Indian Ocean.

October 1 "Karlsruhe" went to the area chosen by Koehler for hunting. The entire upper deck and quarter quarters of the cruiser were covered with a one and a half meter layer of coal. Only the artillery pieces had free islands. "Karlsruhe" was heavily rising on the wave, the stern of the cruiser vibrated strongly. On October 2, the Karlsruhe again met the Asuncion at sea. The steamer brought a lot of important news. One was sad, announcing the death of the German auxiliary cruiser Cap Trafalgar. There was also a report that Admiral Count Spee's squadron was heading for South America and that the British armored cruisers Good Hope, Manmouths and Glasgow were hastening south to intercept it. Three more British cruisers were reportedly rounding Cape Horn, heading for the Chilean coast, where everyone predicted very interesting events in the near future. There have also been many reports of chronic fuel shortages in Brazil. Electricity consumption in big cities has been reduced. The flow of goods on the railroads has also greatly decreased. The Brazilian government banned the export of fuel from the country, however, this did not prevent British ships from leaving Brazil with full holds of coal. The country in practice demonstrated the extensibility of the concept of "neutrality".

From October 3 to 5, the Karlsruhe searched in vain for prey. Only in the evening of October 5, the Krefeld, sent to reconnaissance in an easterly direction, sent a radiogram: "I see some kind of steamer."

The steamer, which sailed far east of the usual trade routes, apparently had some good reason for this. The chase went on for more than two hours. It turned out that this was the English ship Farne, carrying a cargo of the most excellent Cardiff coal (7000 tons) from Barry to Montevideo. Since the German team made up for the Stratroy and the Chinese friends were left without work, Keller decided not to sink the Farn, but to turn it into a coal transport of his squadron. Thus, the captain-lieutenant of the reserve Lubipus received the second ship in command. Captain 2nd rank Koehler again had the idea to send this transport with coal towards Admiral Spee's squadron when it became known that it was already close enough. In the meantime, it was decided to send "Farn" to "Asuncion", so that there he would await further orders.

The fact is that on the Karlsruhe they again heard a close radio from some English cruiser. At night, it was already so clearly received that Koehler decided to retreat 30 miles to the east, where he stood up again, stopping the cars. Intuition did not fail Koehler again. At this time, the Bristol was inspecting the coast of Brazil, and the Cornwall and Macedonia were cruising very close. October 6 "Cornwell" examined the Rocas reef, and then approached the island of Fernando Naron. From there, the British cruiser headed for the reefs of St. Paul, passing on the morning of October 7 through the place where the Farne was captured.

While the British cruisers combed the area of operations "Karlsruhe", the German cruiser, being 30 miles to the east, was waiting for the appearance of new booty.

We didn't have to wait long. At dawn on October 6, the Rio Negro reported the appearance of a column of smoke on the horizon. Karlsruhe set in motion and soon discovered the English steamer Niceto de Larinaga, sailing from Buenos Aires to London with a cargo of oats and maize (8000 tons). A prize team was sent to the ship. Having received her report, Koehler decided to sink the ship. The team was taken to Krefeld. This English steamer had a powerful radio station, but did not even attempt to inform the English ships that a German cruiser was pursuing it, although the chase lasted for about an hour. From the log of incoming and outgoing radio messages, it became known that the steamer received a warning from the cruiser Bristol about the Karlsruhe being in this area and a recommendation to take about 30 miles to the east. Coincidentally, Karlsruhe, in order to avoid meeting with

English cruiser, also retreated 30 miles to the east.

To impress the English captain, he was told that his course on the Karlsruhe was known in advance. The surprised captain blurted out, asking if the commander of the Karlsruhe knew that another English steamer was following him, also leaving Buenos Aires, but with a lower speed. It turned out that the British captain had told the truth.

On October 2, at 07:00, the promised ship already appeared on the horizon. The Karlsruhe moved slowly towards him. The name of the ship turned out to be "Linrovan". He went from Buenos Aires with a cargo of grain to London and Liverpool. In addition, in the holds of the ship there was sugar, lard in barrels and 12 cars. Koehler decided to sink the ship. The captain and crew were transferred to the Krefeld. Along with the captain on board was his sick wife and her young nurse.

These were the first women captured by the Karlsruhe during corsair operations. The senior gunner of the cruiser, senior lieutenant von Borne, asked the commander to use this ship for firing practice as a shield. Koehler agreed and, having waited for the Krefeld to leave with the prisoners, the Karlsruhe fired one shot at the Linrovan with practical shells from a long distance and several shots at shorter distances with defective shells. At 15:00 the ship sank. "At depth, its cargo hatches broke," recalls Senior Lieutenant Aust, "and everything that was able to swim surfaced from the holds, mainly barrels of lard. The commander wanted, by passing the cruiser back and forth over this place, to make it all blur in different directions, but the barrels again gathered together. Now the sharks appeared and began to fight over pieces of fat that had fallen out of their broken barrels. This time, the sharks got prey that had never been seen before in these places: fat rats that had survived after the death of the steamer were sitting on the barrels by the thousands. Navigation in the place where the steamer sank shortly before is very dangerous. All its wooden parts - yardarms, topmasts, cargo arrows - due to their great buoyancy, break down at a depth from their places and float to the surface at high speed. The same thing happens with boats. The thickness of the torn gear with which they were attached to their places indicates what kind of force is rapidly pushing them up. I think, concludes Aust, that it is possible that logs rising to the surface with great speed can pierce the bottom of the ship.

On October 8, just as the sun had risen, the signalmen of the Karlsruhe discovered another steamer on the horizon. The steamer raised the English flag at a great distance, but, guessing the enemy in the Karlsruhe, lowered the flag and tried to leave. From the blue pipe with a black top and a wide white mark on the German cruiser, they guessed that the ship belonged to the Liverpool company Lamport and Nolte.

An hour later, the cruiser overtook the English ship. The ship's name turned out to be "Cervantes". He went from Buenos Aires to Liverpool with a cargo of sugar, wool, hides and fodder (4500 tons). The team (45 people) consisted exclusively of the British. In addition, there were four Hispanic passengers on the ship, which was the first time the Karlsruhe sailors had to deal with. Everyone was transferred to the Krefeld, and the steamer was blown up using a new method, attaching explosive charges from the outside of the side below the waterline. The new technique turned out to be very successful - having received a huge hole, the Cervantes quickly sank.

47 new prisoners reminded Captain 2nd Rank Koehler that the question of their further detention on the Krefeld had already grown into a problem. There were already 408 prisoners, and they belonged to twenty different nationalities. From among the subjects of the countries at war with Germany, 205 Englishmen, 8 Finns, 7 Russians and 2 Frenchmen were captured. From



representatives of neutral countries, there were 107 Chinese, 22 Spaniards, 10 Dutch, 13 Swedes, 4 Americans, 2 Italians, 3 Chileans, 4 Norwegians, 1 Dane, 3 Swiss, 2 Mexicans, 1 Ecuadorian, 1 Cuban, 1 Arab. Only 175 people.

Captain 2nd Rank Koehler invited the captain of the Krefeld to a meeting, discussing with him the question of where it would be best to land the prisoners. As a result, the port of Tenerife in the Canary Islands was chosen. Koehler ordered the Krefeld to enter Tenerife no earlier than October 22, believing that he could still remain in the area for these ten days.

The Karlsruhe commander apparently believed that the area of his operations was not yet known to the enemy. In fact, the British knew in which area the German cruiser was operating, but simply could not allocate a single ship there. Admiral Cradock with his detachment went to Cape Horn to intercept Admiral Spee's squadron, and the Karlsruhe area of operations was now in the area of responsibility of Admiral Stodart. After the departure of Cradock, Stodart was ordered to go to Pernambuco, where he would assume the position of "senior naval commander of the area north of Montevideo", raising the flag on the cruiser Carnarvon. Together with the cruisers Bristol and Orama, the admiral was asked to take a position to guard the trade routes leading to Montevideo. From the Mediterranean, the armored cruiser Defense was sent to Admiral Stodart in case Spee's squadron managed to slip past Admiral Cradock's detachment unnoticed.

In this situation, everyone somehow forgot about the Karlsruhe, so the German cruiser continued to operate practically without interference. At 23:00 on October 8, from the Karlsruhe, they saw steamship lights in the sea and around midnight, with a blank shot, they stopped the English steamer Prut-London, going from Chile to St. Vincent with a cargo of 2,300 tons of barley and 3,500 tons of saltpeter. On the morning of October 9, the crew of the ship was transferred to the Krefeld, which had not yet had time to leave. "Prut-London" was blown up and sank at about 10 o'clock in the morning. On the same afternoon, the Spanish postal steamer Cadix literally stumbled on the Karlsruhe. There were so many passengers on board that she tipped over as they all huddled on one side to look at the Karlsruhe.

"The sight of our cruiser could lead the passengers to many thoughts, if they understood anything in maritime affairs," Senior Lieutenant Aust wrote in his diary. "In any case, the traces of our frequent coal loading should have attracted their attention. The only thing that, as in peacetime, shone clean, was our flag. They could not marvel at our boat rowers. Everyone thought that we were almost dying of hunger, but our people were not at all like starving people - a good, plentiful and always fresh supply of provisions, replenished from prizes, served them well. From the sun they became black, and they could be mistaken for Indians. They could serve as a good advertisement for the correct regimen - the general state of health was very good. And only this can explain that the team easily endured the hard work of loading coal and unloading ships under the scorching sun. Most of all, of course, stokers suffered from the heat. Therefore, they did not have such faces ready to burst from health, like the sailors. But they didn't have any serious illnesses either. The steamer Cadix was soon released, and expressed her gratitude for not having been delayed for long, with mighty horns, to which we gladly returned the same. In addition, we wished him

happy sailing."

On the morning of October 10, Karlsruhe detained the Norwegian steamer Bergenhaus, which was released after inspection. The next loading of coal was approaching, and the cruiser turned to rendezvous with Asuncion and Farne.

"October 11," recalls Senior Lieutenant Aust, "when the Karlsruhe approached the place where the Asuncion was waiting for us at about 3 p.m., the signalman reported that three ships were visible. He was scolded for not even knowing how to count to three but he stood his ground, and,

indeed, we soon saw six masts from the bridge, and after a while the steamers themselves. One of them, upon our appearance, began to leave at full speed, the other two remained calmly standing still. At the same time, it was reported from the radio room that the Asuncion was asking for help, as it was being pursued by an enemy ship. Thus, it became clear that the ship leaving us was the Asuncion. We immediately reassured him, and he turned back. Meanwhile, the Karlsruhe increased its speed and soon approached other steamers. One of them raised the German flag. It was the Farn. The other fearfully and slowly raised the English flag. We were dumbfounded with amazement. Captain Lubinus told us the following. "A steamer under the English flag approached the rendezvous point. Lubinus ordered the English flag to be raised on the Farn as well. The Englishman raised his call signs - Condor from London and asked the Farn about its name and port of registry, to which he immediately answered.

With the help of signals, a long conversation ensued between them. The stranger was interested in whether the Farn had any information about the war, whether he knew anything about English warships, etc. When this conversation began to take on an undesirable character, Karlsruhe appeared on the horizon. The Englishman and the Asuncion mistook it for one of the English cruisers, and the latter took to flight. The Briton continued to stand calmly. "Farn" also remained in place, because. recognized us immediately.

It would be difficult to wish for a more convenient capture for us. The Condor was a disgusting-looking ship with a bright green pipe, but we looked at it with completely different eyes after we found out what kind of cargo it was carrying: a lot of provisions, dynamite and 150 tons of engine oil. He went from New York to Chile. The captain was warned of our actions and was very careful. He made a long detour to the east, bypassed the West India Islands and carefully avoided the usual paths of steamers. Especially valuable for us was engine oil, which we could well use as fuel. Provisions were also very handy, because. it was coming to an end with us and on auxiliary vessels. Dynamite cartridges also arrived in time, which we used up in very large quantities when sinking the captured steamers. We had very few left. We immediately set about unloading the captured steamer with the help of all cutters and boats we had. It turned out to be much more difficult and slower than we thought. barrels of oil were under other cargoes. By the way, among the cargo was a lot of mirror glass for shop windows. Fortunately, we were not obliged to handle them with due care, otherwise there would be no end to the loading. "Krefeld" was happy landing on her team and this steamer. There were also five Germans in it, whom we took for ourselves.

The unloading of the Condor continued until 13 October. Part of the provisions was sent to the Krefeld, and the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler ordered the ship to leave for Tenerife. One of the captured English captains arrived at the Karlsruhe before leaving and promised to inform his government about the humane treatment that the English sailors found in captivity. At 16:00, the Krefeld was given a signal to leave for Santa Cruz in Tenerife, where the ship was supposed to deliver the prisoners no earlier than October 22. "Krefeld" raised a huge flag in parting and passed by "Karlsruhe" and the entire "squadron". An orchestra played on the cruiser, performing the traditional farewell song of German sailors, "Yes, I must move to the city." The Krefeld was slowly disappearing over the horizon. He took mail with him, and on the Karlsruhe they hoped that their relatives would finally receive the first news from them since the start of the war. When the Krefeld disappeared over the horizon, the Condor was sunk. It was impossible to blow it up because of the load of dynamite on board. Therefore, the kingstones were opened on the English steamer and the portholes were smashed, after which it sank rather quickly.

"Never since the beginning of the war, the Karlsruhe has been supplied with such an abundance of fuel as on October 16," Senior Lieutenant Aust noted in his diary. — We had 180 tons

liquid fuel and 1,500 tons of coal, of which 1,100 tons are the best Cardiff. We took all this from our prizes."

October 17 "Karlsruhe" went to sea, meeting at the agreed point with the "Rio Negro". The captain of the transport reported to Koehler that after the sinking of the Condor, two powerful explosions occurred, as a result of which the Rio Negro, which was several miles from the place of the sinking of the Condor, shook so that the compass card jumped out of its bowler hat. After some time, the Asuncion approached the rendezvous point, bringing joyful news, intercepted by it from the stream of radio messages: in Europe, German troops took Antwerp, shaming the British.

On October 18, together with two of its satellites, the Karlsruhe came to its old "ambush" place - north of the island of Fernando Naronya. Before the cruiser had time to anchor, the signalmen reported the appearance of a steamer on the horizon. I had to urgently weigh anchor and go towards new prey. Another victim of the Karlsruhe was the steamer Glanton, sailing from London to Montevideo with 3,700 tons of Cardiff coal for Wilson & Son. Without thinking for a second, Koehler ordered the ship to be sunk. The Karlsruhe did not need a corner, and Koehler no longer had extra people to make up the command of the captured ship. From the "Glanton" to the "Rio Negro" prisoners and a supply of provisions were transported. The blown up "Glanton" had not yet disappeared from the surface of the sea, as the signalmen reported on a new steamer that appeared on the horizon. "Karlsruhe" chased after him, but the ship turned out to be Dutch ("Zaaland"), going to Chile from Amsterdam. The Dutchman was released without being examined. Late in the evening, an Italian steamer passed by the Karlsruhe, which was also released without inspection.

On the day that the Glanton was sunk, the English armored cruiser Caernarvon passed just ten miles from this place, sailing on October 15 under the flag of Admiral Stoddart of St. Vincent. If Stoddart had continued to follow the same course, then he would have gone straight to the Karlsruhe and his squadron at the time of the sinking of the Glanton. But it was at this moment that the English admiral received the order to urgently go to Pernambuco.

From October 19 to 22, the Karlsruhe lay in ambush along with the Rio Negro, waiting in vain for new victims to appear. The signalmen peered into the horizon until they hurt, but saw nothing.

October 22 on German ships, as required by the charter, the Empress's name day was celebrated. After a short service, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler addressed the team with a speech, recalling that the Empress, as a true German, brought six sons and a daughter to the Fatherland. Now all six of her sons and son-in-law are participating in hostilities, and Her Majesty, standing at the head of the Red Cross, sets an example for all German women. The sailors shouted "Hurrah!", on which the ceremony ended.

More than the namesake of the Empress, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler, was worried that today, October 22, 1914, Krefeld would land prisoners on Tenerife, and the whole world would learn about the Karlsruhe area of operations. The cruiser commander came to the firm conviction that it was time to change the operational area, ceasing to tempt fate.

"The whole day we were waiting," recalls Aust, "that we would catch someone to commemorate the birthday of the Empress. When, after 10 p.m., we finally saw the lights of a steamer, we were sure that our hope, even at the last minute, would come true. It turned out, however, that this was the Swedish steamer Atlant from Gothenburg, which was heading south. He was released without being examined."

The sacrifice in honor of the name day of the Empress was only made the next day, on October 23, when the English steamer Harstdel sailed directly onto the German cruiser from

Liverpool, which carried 4600 tons of maize from Rosario to Bristol. He, without hesitation, was sent to the bottom, transporting the team and food to the Rio Negro. The Harstdel had not yet gone under water when the cruiser's signalmen found another steamer. The Karlsruhe chased after him, but, to the great dismay of the crew, the ship turned out to be Swedish again (Annie Johnson from Gothenburg). He was examined and released. On October 24, Koehler decided to leave the area in which he had been robbing so fruitfully since September 1. Now, the raider commander believed, the British, having received information about the Karlsruhe from released prisoners, would begin to seriously comb this area. As if confirming his fears, they reported from the radio room that for the first time after a fairly long break, they were again clearly audible radio communications from British cruisers prowling nearby.

Captain 2nd Rank Koehler decided to return to the West Indies. He had long hatched a plan to attack the numerous English and French colonies, as the pirates of old often did. Especially often then the island of Barbados was attacked.

It was from him, following the classical examples of the XVII-XVIII centuries, that Koehler decided to start. His idea delighted the Karlsruhe officers. Koehler had not done this earlier solely because of the cruiser's unreliable supply of coal. Now, when coal was in abundance, nothing prevented the German officer from repeating the exploits of his English, Spanish and Portuguese predecessors, whose legendary names inspired Koehler from the depths.

centuries.

In making this decision, the Karlsruhe commander had no doubt that he was doing the right thing, for some reason believing that earlier the British command did not know about his area of operations and learned only from the prisoners landed on Tenerife. Now every radiogram on the air was interpreted by him as the beginning of a global raid on the Karlsruhe, organized by the enemy. In fact, the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler was mistaken. The British knew for a long time where he was. He was just extremely lucky, and, by and large, the British were simply not up to him. At that moment, when Koehler lost his nerve and decided to go north, there was not a single English cruiser near the Karlsruhe. The armored cruiser Defense had just left St. Vincent on the Cape Verde Islands, and Admiral Stoddart on the Carnarvon arrived in Pernambuco, where he learned that the Karlsruhe supposedly received provisions on October 20, 70 miles west of Cape San Roquier. The Bristol, which had been ordered to inspect the area, was loading coal at Abrolhos Roque, where the Cornwell was also stationed, guarding the base. "Macedonia" loaded coal and repaired the car.

In the area between the Canary Islands and the Cape Verde Islands, only one English cruiser, the Highflower, was on patrol, but he soon moved to replace the Estreya to escort transports en route to the Cape of Good Hope, since the Estreya went to the coast of the German south -West Africa. Therefore, when the first information was received about the change of the operational area by Koehler, only a couple of auxiliary cruisers remained at the disposal of the British in the vast expanse of the ocean.

V

The waters of the West Indies, and more precisely, the Caribbean Sea, have always been given great importance in German plans for waging war on the open ocean. Even before the start of the war, the Germans had set up two secret coal stations in the area, one at Plana Seis in the Bahamas and the other 250 miles east of Trinidad. But both stations were

discovered on September 12 by the British cruiser Berwick. Moreover, on one of them, Berwick captured three German ships.

Whether the captain of the 2nd rank Koehler knew about this remained unknown. It is known that on October 25, the commander of the Karlsruhe gathered all his steamships - the Rio Negro, Asuncion, Farn and Indrani - handing over to their captains instructions with the exact indication of where and when they should meet with the Karlsruhe " In the open sea. Koehler decided to take the Farn with him to replenish his supply of coal. Late in the evening of October 25, the Karlsruhe, accompanied by the Farn, went north without lights.

"We had already retired a considerable distance from the steamers' favorite route to South America," Senior Lieutenant Aust wrote in his diary on October 26, "when this morning, to our greatest surprise, it was reported about a steamer in the southeast direction from us, heading on North. Visible from afar, high white superstructures showed that this was a large passenger steamer. Based on the color of the pipe, we concluded that it belongs to the Lamport and Holt Society. At 11:00 the ship was stopped. It was the Vandik, the third largest steamship of this society with a displacement of more than 10,000 tons, built only three years ago. Thus, our best prey came across to us quite unexpectedly. In addition to 210 passengers, of which 112 - they occupied the cabins of the 1st and 2nd classes - mostly North Americans, there were 130 bags of mail on the ship, \$ 2,500 belonging to the steamship company, a decent amount of miscellaneous cargo and about 100 tons of frozen meat .

The Vandyck was sailing from Buenos Aires, heading through Trinidad and Barbados to New York. Bristol warned him to watch out for us. The captain walked with great caution - at night with closed lights and did not use the radiotelegraph for a whole week. Therefore, he was extremely surprised when the prize officer with a serious mine told him that we had been waiting for him since yesterday.

The captain was an old man, and the failure completely discouraged him. We used to give the command of the captured ships the choice: either move to the Karlsruhe as prisoners of war, or give us a written undertaking that they would not take part in hostilities either against us or against our allies during the continuation of the war. In the latter case, they will be set free as soon as possible.

Until that time, all the British, without a moment's hesitation, gave a subscription. When such an undertaking was explained and presented to the crew of the Vandik, its captain began to speak to his men in a speech calling them to indignation. The prize officer had to report this to the commander, who sent two armed sailors to the steamer to take the captain away under escort. In the meantime, the captain was reassured by his more prudent officers, so this measure proved unnecessary. The passengers mistook us for an English cruiser until the very last moment, and when at last their error was cleared up, a cry of despair arose. They expected robbery and the most cruel insults from the "Huns".

This is how the senseless slander of the South American press, which was under the influence of the Anglo-French, taught them to relate to the actions of our military. And this nonsense was believed not only by the deck passengers, who belonged to the lowest and incapable of sound thinking class of society, which can be justified by a small degree of their development, but, alas, by the inhabitants of the luxurious cabins of the 1st class, who consider themselves to be among the intellectual elite of society.

Among the 1st class passengers was the Colombian envoy to Argentina (mestizo) with his wife and child. He prudently stocked up on the recommendation of our envoy in Buenos Aires, addressed to the commanders of the German warships. He showed this

recommendation to our prize officer, trembling with fear, begging for his life, as well as the life of his wife and child. He calmed down only some time after the commander appointed a special officer, Lieutenant Count Beissel, to be with the person of this diplomat and his family. When, finally, the passengers were quite comfortable with the idea that we had absolutely no intention of treating them rudely or taking away their property, their surprise knew no bounds. They burst into thanks. In order to give them time to calmly collect their things, the commander postponed their disembarkation from the steamer until the next day. In the meantime, our entire "squadron" was called here by telegraph and the steamers approached us one by one. This gathering of ships made a considerable impression on the crew and passengers of the Vandik.

Unloading "Vandik" began at 06:00 on 27 October. Passengers even had time to have lunch on the liner again. Then, together with their belongings, they were transported to the Asuncion, which was supposed to deliver them and the teams of the last three prizes to one of the neutral ports. From the Vandik, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler decided first of all to reload the food supply.

On the "Karlsruhe" and the steamers of his "squadron" stocks of fresh meat, flour and rice were coming to an end. Without the latter, the Chinese, who voluntarily remained at the disposal of Koehler, could not live at all. So "Wandik", one might say, was sent down to the Germans by Providence itself.

The chief assistant of "Vandik" asked for permission to direct the unloading of luggage. The British officers behaved calmly, doing everything possible to prevent panic among the passengers.

"The steamer boats were loaded the day before," recalls Aust, "and at exactly 6 o'clock in the morning they rolled off the side. Passengers looked at the work with curiosity and saw an instructive sight: all the wooden boats of this huge and completely new the steamer turned out to be with a large leak and filled with water so quickly that they did not have time to pull out the luggage, and it was all wet. The injured passengers were furious. They attacked first the first officer, then the captain, and the Karlsruhe officers who were watching the work had to calm them down. After that, transportation began to be carried out on heavy, but serviceable boats of our steamers, and ended by noon.

In the afternoon, the officers and crew of the Vandic were transferred to the Asuncion. The crews of the Glanton and Hrasdel were transported to the same transport with a ten-day supply of food. "Asuncion" was much smaller in size than "Vandik". In addition, she was not a passenger steamer, and it was very difficult to accommodate such a large number of passengers, the vast majority of whom were women and children. The captain, the first mate and all the officers gave their cabins to the women and children. The men, on the other hand, had to accommodate themselves, as best they could, on the deck.

Captain 2nd Rank Koehler ordered to hang in the cabins and saloons where passengers from the Wandik were accommodated, something like an impromptu statement of the "German command" printed on Karlsruhe.

The "statement" stated that German soldiers and sailors never encroach on property, and even more so on the lives of civilian passengers. This behavior is peculiar only to the British, since they have a custom to reward officers and sailors with "prize money", i.e. money received from the sale of someone else's property. This English custom, which dates back to the pirates of the Middle Ages, does not exist, and cannot exist, in the German fleet, which is only doing its duty. It is this duty, emphasized Koehler, that makes the Karlsruhe seize ships and inconvenience passengers. Koehler urged the Americans to use not English, but neutral ships.

Captain 2nd Rank Erich Koehler was no doubt a romantic. He had a little more than a week to live, but, like any romantic, he never thought about it, continuing to fight for his ideals - the fleet and the nation.

Among the passengers were two American newspaper correspondents. Almost going crazy with their luck, they got permission to interview the commander of the Karlsruhe. Captain 2nd rank Koehler took the opportunity to accuse the British of unleashing a world war, as well as of the barbaric methods of waging it. He did not trouble himself with examples, because he did not know them, having been cut off from sources of information since the beginning of the war. However, he impressed correspondents with his conviction that the cause for which he fought was right.

Having finished transporting prisoners and passengers to Asuncion, they handed over mail to him and ordered him to proceed to the port of Para in such a way as to arrive there no earlier than November 1.

The captain of Asuncion, Fritsch, was very depressed at the prospect of parting with Karlsruhe. Several times he turned to Koehler with a request to allow him to continue sailing together with the cruiser. But Koehler was adamant.

While provisions were being reloaded from the Wandik, around midnight the signalmen of the Karlsruhe discovered steamship lights on the horizon. The steamer was heading straight for the cruiser, which didn't actually have to move to stop it. The steamer turned out to be English, the Royal Specter from London. Thanks to the clear night, ships crowded in the ocean were noticed from it. The captain of the ship was so surprised at this that he ordered a change in course, wanting to know what had happened out of sheer curiosity. The steamer was carrying a cargo of coffee worth 5 million marks destined for a neutral buyer. The Royal Spetzer itself was so old and dilapidated that it was absolutely of no value. After some hesitation, Koehler let go of the coffee steamer, remembering that coffee growers are the most vindictive people in the world.

On the morning of October 28, Wandik was sent to the bottom, and Karlsruhe continued her march to the West Indies, accompanied by three of her coal transports. On October 29 and 30, coal was received from the Farn, after which the ship was ordered to proceed to a neutral port, try to load there and meet with the Karlsruhe later at the agreed rendezvous point.

Now the cruiser was escorted by the Rio Negro and the Indrani. On November 2 and 3, Captain 2nd Rank Koehler held a meeting with his officers, introducing them to the strategy and tactics of the cruiser's future operations. In addition to attacking English and French possessions, Koehler planned to cause alarm and commotion on the commercial shipping routes leading to the English islands of Barbados and Trinidad in the Caribbean. First of all, it was planned to attack Barbados, as the famous pirate of the 17th century, Henry Morgan, did repeatedly, as a result of which he became the governor of Barbados. It is not known whether the inspired image of the legendary corsair stood before Koehler's eyes, but the commander of the Karlsruhe decided to start from Barbados, since it was known that there were many large passenger ships in its harbor, which Koehler planned to destroy, and, if possible, capture. Such an operation, if successfully carried out, would greatly undermine the prestige of England in the West Indies, and indeed throughout the American continent. Everyone on the Karlsruhe understood this and looked forward to the arrival of the cruiser in the waters of Barbados.

The British also understood this, although they did not know the details of the plan of Captain 2nd Rank Koehler.

The British command was worried not so much by the Karlsruhe as by the possibility of a breakthrough to the West Indies by the squadron of Admiral Spee. Among other things, the squadron of Admiral Spee could appear in Caribbean waters, passing through the Panama Canal, since

the US government announced that no more than three ships (or vessels) of any nationality could pass through the canal at the same time, and three others, even if of the same nationality, could be at the entrance from either end of the canal.

This made it possible for Admiral Spee to use the Panama Canal without disturbing the concentration of his forces. On the other hand, the Karlsruhe was approaching the canal with the indomitability of evil fate. All this put the West Indian detachment of English cruisers and the ports on the islands in a very dangerous position. The commander of the English detachment, Captain 1st Rank Clinton-Baker, who concurrently commanded the cruiser Berwick, had at his disposal only the British cruiser Essex and two French ones, Condé and Descartes.

To the north, in the New York area, Admiral Hornby's squadron was operating, holding the flag on the old battleship Glory. The squadron included the armored cruisers Lancaster and Suffolk, the auxiliary cruiser Caronia and the Canadian cruiser Niobe.

Together, Hornby's squadron and Clinton-Baker's detachment were strong enough to destroy Count Spee's squadron, but each British ship individually was weaker than the German cruisers. Admiral Hornby was ordered to watch the Panama Canal, dedicating two of his fast cruisers to the task. These ships, in the event of the appearance of the enemy, were ordered not to lose sight of him, but not to engage in battle with him. At the same time, Captain 1st Rank Clinton-Baker was about to begin exploring various Caribbean islands, where, according to rumors, the Karlsruhe base was located.

On November 2, the Asunción arrived at Para, disembarking the crew and passengers of the Vandica, whose captain informed the British command of the details of the capture of his ship on November 26.

After analyzing all the available data, Clinton-Baker no longer doubted that the Karlsruhe now intended to operate on the shipping lanes leading to Trinidad and Barbados in order to inflict the same blow to British maritime prestige as the Emden had done in the East Indies.

November 4, 1914 "Karlsruhe" was 400 miles southeast of Barbados. The cruiser was in high spirits. The commander was on the bridge, the sailors free from duty gathered on the forecastle, where the ship's orchestra played cheerful melodies. On the occasion of the "acquisition" of fresh provisions, the officers arranged a feast in the wardroom, enjoying game, fresh butter and other delicacies obtained on the Vandick.

The senior officer of the cruiser, Lieutenant Commander Ferdinand Studt, put out red wine to the wardroom. The room was decorated with greenery and potted flowers, also obtained on the Vandik. Only Senior Lieutenant Baron von Althaus, who was on duty on the bridge, was absent from the feast. There was a noisy and cheerful mood in the wardroom. The ominous idea of a "last supper" never crossed anyone's mind. The sailors had also finished their supper by this time and were gathering, as they always did in the evenings, on the forecastle and under the forecastle to listen to music. The ship's orchestra was located under the navigation bridge.

It was 18:30. The cruiser was at point 10 gr. 7 min. US and 55 gr. 25 min. ZD. At a slight distance behind the stern of the Karlsruhe followed the steamers Rio Negro and Indrani.

It was a moment of brief tropical twilight. It became very stuffy in the wardroom. Many hurried to finish the feast and go out into the fresh air. The senior officer had already risen from the table, signaling to the officers that they could use their time as they pleased. Many also stood up, hurrying to get to the poop from the stuffy wardroom, located in the stern of the ship.

Suddenly, the Karlsruhe shook all over, as if from a strong shock. In the first moment, many



thought that the cruiser ran into a reef. Then there was a dull hum and crackle. The light went out. The ship began to list strongly to the port side. One of the officers shouted: "Mine hole!"

Having got out of the wardroom in the darkness, the officers rushed to their places on alert.

"Before I had time to climb to the aft superstructure - my place as the 2nd artillery officer," recalls Senior Lieutenant Aust, "I heard the command: 'Barr down the impenetrable bulkheads!' and five blows of the mallet, which are usual in this case.

In front of our stern, I saw the floating hull of the ship, which almost instantly sank before my eyes. At first I mistook it for a strange vessel which we encountered. In fact, it was the bow of our own cruiser."

From the coal transports they clearly saw how a terrible explosion broke the Karlsruhe cruiser in half. Flames of fire and puffs of black-brown smoke shot up high into the air above the bow of the ship. The torn foremast collapsed into the water. The command bridge and the forward superstructure were torn to pieces.

The bow of the cruiser to the front tube, having broken off from the rest of the hull, with all the people who were there, including the commander and the watch officer, sank almost instantly.

The stern of the Karlsruhe, where they managed to batten down all the doors and necks of impenetrable bulkheads, held out on the water for another twenty minutes. Several people were thrown overboard by the explosion. Some of them, burnt and crippled, were pulled onto boats, which were immediately launched on the water by order of the first mate.

The Rio Negro and Indrani, realizing that a disaster had occurred on the Karlsruhe (the hundred-meter columns of flame that rose above the cruiser left no doubt about this), quickly approached the stern of the cruiser, lowering the boats on the move. Only after the senior officer who gave the command "Leave the ship!", Together with the mechanic on duty, went through all the lower rooms and personally made sure that no one was left there, the last boat with officers rolled off the remains of the Karlsruhe.

"When we were 100 meters away," recalls Senior Lieutenant Aust, "the stern of our ship suddenly rose out of the water so that the propellers and the rudder became clearly visible. From the boats, which still continued to search for those floating, they shouted three times "Hurrah!" to the remnants of the cruiser going to the bottom and our comrades who died on it. Then there was silence. The burden of grief and heartache fell on us.

Stunned, they looked for an answer: "What happened? Why did this happen?"

The catastrophe happened so suddenly and so terribly that not everyone was able to immediately realize it. "Only later, gradually, when all the rescued were gathered on the steamer Rio Negro, when there was complete confidence that our commander, a wonderful person respected and valued by all of us, went to the bottom along with the cruiser dear to us, only then did we fully understand what we had lost and how cruel the blow of fate was," the shocked Senior Lieutenant Aust noted at the end of his diary.

It turned out that two officers (cruiser commander Captain 2nd rank Koehler and watch officer Senior Lieutenant von Althaus) and 261 sailors died in the disaster. 17 officers were saved, thanks solely to the fact that almost all of them "feasted" in the wardroom in the stern of the ship, and 129 sailors (the last shift that did not finish

dinner, and machinists with stokers who were on watch).

The exact cause of the explosion at the Karlsruhe has always remained a mystery. Hugo Jalass, who watched the catastrophe from the bridge of the steamer Indrani, was convinced for the first minute that the Karlsruhe had been torpedoed, because a huge column of water had risen over the port side of the cruiser in a fraction of a second before the explosion. Many theories have been put forward, including the possibility of spontaneous combustion of lubricating oil mixed with fuel oil pumped to the cruiser from the captured Condor.

Later, everyone agreed that the cause of the death of the Karlsruhe was an explosion of ammunition in the bow cellars, which is quite possible in the conditions of heat and humidity characteristic of tropical latitudes. But we must remember that German ammunition did not explode even under the influence of open fire, but only burned. Why did they explode on the Karlsruhe? Capricious Providence, which favored the German cruiser during the four months of the war, suddenly stopped his combat activities so suddenly. If we remember that five days after the Karlsruhe explosion, the valiant Emden will also die on the other side of the world, and a little later the entire squadron of Admiral Count Spee will fall into a trap, then the question involuntarily arises: is this a mere coincidence, or something more, still incomprehensible to our imperfect mind.

For four months of her successful corsair activity, the light cruiser Karlsruhe captured and destroyed 17 enemy steamships with a total displacement of 76,000 tons. The value of the cargo on these ships at the prices of that time was 1.5 million pounds (about a billion dollars at today's prices).

## EPILOGUE

Senior Lieutenant Aust, as, most likely, the overwhelming majority of the crew of the deceased cruiser, perfectly understood that sooner or later their raiding in the ocean would come to an end.

He knew that in the end they would run into a much stronger British cruiser, or even several cruisers, and be destroyed in an unequal battle.

Aust was constantly ready for this battle, dreaming only of inflicting as much damage as possible on the hated British before his own death. But neither he nor anyone else from the Karlsruhe crew was ready for what actually happened.

Stunned and demoralized by the catastrophe, the surviving part of the Karlsruhe crew was distributed among the coal steamers, the overall command of which was taken by Lieutenant Commander Studt.

Coming out of a state of shock, finishing the search for survivors, among whom were many wounded, compiling a list of the dead and rescued, Lieutenant Commander Studt called the captains of the Rio Negro and Indrani Tepfer and Yalassa to a meeting to decide what to do next,

According to Lieutenant Commander Studt, first of all it was necessary to keep the very fact of the death of the Karlsruhe secret.

The activity of the cruiser led to a rather strong disorganization of the enemy's commercial transportation in the Atlantic Ocean, to the distraction of a large number of warships from other tasks, and to the dispersion of enemy forces over a vast area of the ocean in search of a cruiser. Let this situation exist as long as possible.

The preservation of the secret of the death of the Karlsruhe was facilitated by the fact that on both ships there were no foreigners, except for the Chinese, who would have to be landed in some neutral port. The Chinese, on the other hand, were hired workers who served for a salary, and they could be transported by sea as much as they liked without entering any port.

Both ships were coal miners, and therefore there were no problems with fuel.

The problem was to solve the question: where to sail next?

Four possibilities were considered. The first and easiest option is to head to the nearest neutral port, where you will be interned until the end of the war. However, Lieutenant Commander Studt did not even consider it. Arrival at any neutral port would immediately declassify the fact of the death of the Karlsruhe. The second possibility would be to try to get to the nearest German colony, say Cameroon, or German West Africa. However, it was known that both colonies were tightly blockaded from the sea by the British. In addition, Studt had no idea about the general military situation in these colonies.

As a third possibility, an exit to the Pacific Ocean around Cape Horn was considered in an attempt to establish contact with the squadron of Admiral Count Spee. All that was known about this squadron was that it was located somewhere in the Pacific Ocean. And no more. (Information about the battle at Coronel, where Spee managed to destroy the squadron of Admiral Cradock, Lieutenant Commander Studt did not have any.)

This variant of action was also abandoned, since it assumed such a long trip, which would not have been enough even for the huge stock that was available on the ships. And the possibility of bunkering somewhere along the way looked very doubtful.

There was a fourth possibility. It was also extremely risky, since it involved breaking north through the English blockade of the stems to reach neutral Norway, and then fiording south into the North Sea in an attempt to pass the Skagerrak or Kattegat to the Baltic.

On this, the fourth, option, and decided to stop. The general opinion dominated to return to Germany in order to continue participation in the war.

At first they decided to go north on two steamers, but then they realized that it would be much more difficult to break through the English blockade with a detachment than alone. Nobody wanted to separate and go different routes.

Therefore, it was decided to reload coal and all other reserves from the Indrani to the Rio Negro, after which the Indrani should be flooded and go north. And so they did. They reloaded all the supplies on the Rio Negro, and the Indrani was sunk near, not far from the island of Testigos.

Hugo Jalasse thus ended his short tenure as captain, returning to his duties as chief officer on the Rio Negro.

On the night of November 10-11, moonless and dark, the Rio Negro slipped through the strait leading north from the island of St. Christopher and out into the open ocean.

On the morning of November 11, the ship, unnoticed by anyone, crossed the shipping route linking New York with the ports of South America. The Rio Negro then proceeded on a course to the northeast, keeping about 150 miles south of the shipping route leading from the Caribbean to the Azores.

Being in the very center of the Atlantic, the ship turned north and from November 16 to 20

successively crossed three shipping lanes connecting Sombrello with the English Channel, New York with Gibraltar, and then New York with England.

In the North Atlantic, the ship was met by stormy weather. The wind speed reached 11 points. A steep wave and almost zero visibility due to constant snowstorms, although they contributed to the secrecy of the campaign, led to the Rio Negro moving along the course at a speed of 7 knots with great difficulty.

An additional difficulty was created by the absence on the ship of any maps of the North Atlantic, through which the ship had to break through to its homeland. Hugo Jalasse has been using a map from a school geographic atlas that was accidentally found on a ship for the past few days.

Before dawn on November 29, which in those latitudes at this time of the year comes around noon, the Rio Negro saw glimpses of the Runde lighthouse on the approach to Aalesund. "Rio Negro" made it to Norway!

At 14:00 the steamer anchored, waiting for a pilot and permission to use the territorial waters of Norway to pass to Skarerrak.

The situation looked very unusual. There were too many people on the Rio Negro, whose presence on board was very difficult to explain to the Norwegian authorities. It was stated that all those present on board are German citizens, reservists returning from South America to their homeland.

Permission to pass the territorial waters to the Skagerrak was given by the Norwegian authorities on the evening of November 30, and soon the Rio Negro with a pilot on board went fiords South.

While staying in Norwegian waters, Senior Lieutenant Aust and Lieutenant Eyring of the reserve went ashore and headed for Germany by land. Fearing that the Rio Negro would be captured by the British at the last stage, it still existed.

Aust really wanted to bring his diary to Germany intact, which, with the exception of several official documents, remained the only source of information about the Karlsruhe voyage, since both the watch and the cruiser's historical logs were lost.

On December 4, 1914, Aust and Eyring illegally crossed the German border in the Sassnitz region, where they were detained by militia soldiers guarding the border region.

As for the Rio Negro, on December 3 the ship reached Jomfruland, which lies on the coast of the Skagerrak, from where, despite the most severe storm, it headed for Cape Skagen in order to bypass the English warships patrolling in this area.

On the morning of December 5, the Rio Negro anchored in the roadstead of Frederikshavn, trying in vain to get a Belt map and a pilot to pass through the strait in this Danish port.

After that, the ship moved to Helsingør, where, with the help of the German consul in Copenhagen, the necessary map was nevertheless obtained, and the Rio Negro was able to enter the Sound.

At the exit from the strait, the steamer was met by the German destroyer S-124, who was on guard duty there, who escorted the Rio Negro to Kiel, where the steamer arrived on the morning of December 6. However, in order to keep the fact of the death of the Karlsruhe secret, the Rio Negro was not allowed into the port.

Having passed the Kiel Canal, the steamer stood in the roadstead of Wilhelmshaven without any connection with

the coast, which so irresistibly attracted all the sailors of the dead cruiser, exhausted to the last extreme. The strictest quarantine lasted until December 22, and only on the eve of Christmas Eve the Rio Negro was transferred to Hamburg. The surviving sailors from the Karlsruhe were sent to the new light cruiser Regensburg, and the civilian crew of the steamer Rio Negro went on a long-deserved vacation. The breakthrough of the Rio Negro from the South Atlantic to Germany to a large extent contributed to the successful breakthrough into the ocean of the auxiliary cruisers Mewe, Wolf and Seeadler in 1916.

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The British, as Captain Lieutenant Studt expected, did not know anything about the fate of the Karlsruhe for a long time. To them, he still existed, diverting large forces to search for and destroy him.

The British command constantly received reports of the discovery of the Karlsruhe in various parts of the Atlantic and, analyzing the information, came to the conclusion that the German cruiser was operating somewhere in the North Atlantic. The remains of the Karlsruhe had long rested at a depth of 4000 meters, when the battlecruiser Princess Royal was allocated from the Grand Fleet to capture it, which had been scouring the Jamaica region for several weeks in search of the Karlsruhe.

"The disappeared cruiser became a "flying Dutchman", reports about it constantly came from different areas. It was he who delayed the return of the Princess Royal to the Grand Fleet for two weeks. It was impossible not to reckon with the missing cruiser, and immediately after the Battle of Falklands, the Admiralty took steps to form a special squadron to capture it," says Sir Julian Corbett in his classic work on the actions of the British fleet in the First World War. Only on March 19, 1915, the Admiralty received indisputable evidence that the Karlsruhe had died almost six months ago. But reports of his discovery continued to arrive for a long time.

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Armed with the help of Karlsruhe, the huge and clumsy passenger liner Kronprinz Wilhelm significantly outlived its patron. Acting under the command of the former senior navigator of the Karlsruhe, Lieutenant Commander Tierfelder, the Kronprinz Wilhelm destroyed 15 enemy steamships in the Atlantic with a total displacement of 60,522 tons. The owner of the "blue ribbon" in 1902 had a speed of 23 knots and, despite its 25,000 tons of displacement and a length of 202 m, quite easily left all the traps set by the British.

Unfortunately, the huge auxiliary cruiser devoured so much coal that it was much more difficult to supply it than the Karlsruhe.

The British actually cut off the liner from all possible sources of supply, and on April 16, 1915, the Crown Prince Wilhelm was forced, having only 20 tons of coal in the bunkers, to come to neutral Newport News, where he was interned by the Americans.

After the US entered World War I on April 7, 1917, Kronprinz Wilhelm was captured, renamed Von Steuben, and included in the US Navy as a troop transport. Dismantled in 1923.

...

The senior officer of the Karlsruhe cruiser, Lieutenant Commander Ferdinand Studt, who led the rescue of the cruiser's crew and successfully brought the Rio Negro from the West Indies to Germany, subsequently did not make any career. Having received the next rank of captain of the 3rd rank upon retirement, Studt settled and lived quietly on the outskirts of Hamburg, where he died in 1958 at the age of 80.

Operational and tactical characteristics of the light cruiser "Karlsruhe"

Displacement: 4900 tons (standard), 6191 tons (full).

Main dimensions: 142.2 x 13.7 x 5.5 m.

Maximum speed: 27 knots [two-shaft power plant, naval-type turbines, 14 naval-type boilers (10 coal and 4 oil, 26,000 hp, 1,300 tons of coal, 200 tons of fuel oil)].

Armament: twelve 105mm/45 guns, two 500mm underwater torpedo tubes, 120 min.

Reservation: waterline belt - 60-18 mm, deck - 60-40 mm, shields on guns - 50 mm, conning tower - 100 mm.

Cruising range: 5500 miles at 12 knots, 900 miles at 25 knots.

Crew: 19 officers and 355 sailors.

List of officers of the light cruiser "Karlsruhe" on 1.08.1914

Commander: Captain 2nd Rank Erich Koehler (deceased).

Senior officer: Lieutenant Commander Studt.

Senior navigator: Lieutenant Commander Tierfelder (August 6, 1914 was appointed commander of the auxiliary cruiser Kronprinz Wilhelm).

Navigator: lieutenant commander of the Frese reserve (transferred from the "Kronprinz Wilhelm" on 08/06/1914).

Senior artilleryman: senior lieutenant Borne.

2nd artilleryman: senior lieutenant Aust.

Artillery officers: Senior Lieutenant Schroeder (miner),

senior lieutenant Althaus (deceased).

Watch officers: Lieutenant Schmartz,

lieutenant Vanselov,

Lieutenant Dittmer,

Lieutenant Count Beissel,

Lieutenant Enssen,

Lieutenant of the reserve Einring (6.08.1914

translated from "Crown Prince Wilhelm"),

Lieutenant of the reserve Hentschel (October 5, 1914)

appointed captain of the steamship Farn).

Prize Officers: Lieutenant Hoppe,

Lieutenant Gundlyakh.

Mechanical engineers: Grabe,

Merck,

Beck.

Senior Physician: Dr. Warneke.

Auditor: Meinhordt.

## SAFARI CRUISER "KOENIGSBERG"

"Koenigsberg" at the mouth of the Rufiji River

The light cruiser Koenigsberg was laid down on January 12, 1905 at the Navy shipyard in Kiel. From the previously built seven light cruisers, the new ship was distinguished by its greater length, machine power and high autonomy. December 12, 1905 "Koenigsberg" was launched. The godfather of the new ship, as one might expect, was the mayor of Koenigsberg, Dr. Kerte, who christened the cruiser the name of the city entrusted to his care.

The light cruiser Koenigsberg had a total displacement of 3814 tons, a length of 115.3 meters and a speed of 23 knots. It was armed with ten 105 mm guns and two torpedo tubes. In April 1907, the Königsberg began acceptance tests, which, however, were interrupted in early June, and the cruiser under the command of its first commander, Captain 3rd Rank Philip, was awarded the greatest honor - to escort the imperial yacht Hohenzollern during the Kiel regatta.

Luxurious, but very angular, the Kaiser's yacht, accompanied by a graceful, swan-like three-tube cruiser, resembled an aged queen, accompanied by a beautiful young page.

The Kiel regatta was replaced by a regatta in Travemünde, then a trip of the imperial yacht to the North Cape and, finally, a return to the Baltic, where on August 3 the Hohenzollern met with the Russian royal yacht Shtandart, and the Koenigsberg saluted the standard of Nicholas II. After the end of the meeting on August 6 Monarchs "Koenigsberg" escorted the Kaiser's yacht to Kiel and on August 9 was released to continue the interrupted tests.

Having completed the tests on September 9 and completed the crew of 322 people, on September 21, Koenigsberg appeared on the roadstead of the capital of East Prussia, saluting the city whose name the ship had the honor to carry on board with an artillery salute. Blooming with flags, the snow-white ship remained on the roadstead of the ancient capital of the Prussian kings until September 23, receiving numerous deputations from the authorities and citizens of Koenigsberg on board.

Silver chased panels depicting different views of the city adorned the bulkheads of the ship's officer's mess, and the massive gilded crown of the city's coat of arms was transferred to the cruiser as a bow decoration.

Upon returning to Kiel, the Koenigsberg was included in the reconnaissance forces of the fleet instead of the disabled light cruiser Meduza; but apparently the new cruiser

Kaiser Wilhelm liked that already on November 5, 1907, an order was issued to second the Königsberg to the imperial yacht Hohenzollern. This time the imperial couple was going to England, and in order to make a proper impression on his uncle Edward, the Kaiser ordered that the armored cruiser Scharnhorst, the light cruiser Koenigsberg and the messenger ship Sliper be included in the escort of his yacht.

The yacht Hohenzollern, accompanied by everything that the German fleet could boast of, arrived in Portsmouth, from where it proceeded to Port Victoria, at the mouth of the Thames.

Neither the Scharnhorst nor the Koenigsberg, as expected, made the slightest impression on the British, who had already built the first dreadnoughts, and the frustrated Wilhelm II brought his squadron to Rotterdam on the way back not to impress the Dutch with its sea power, but to listen to the Queen of the Netherlands playing the violin.

December 15, 1907 "Koenigsberg" was ordered to return to the reconnaissance forces of the fleet, but on December 17, the commander of the fleet, Admiral Prince Henry of Prussia, raised his flag on the cruiser and headed to Sweden to participate in the ceremony on the occasion of the funeral of the Swedish king Oscar II.

On December 20, the cruiser returned to Kiel, where, without starting combat service, she began to be repaired. Service at sea began in February and continued until December 1908 with numerous exercises in the Baltic and North Seas, as well as in the Atlantic Ocean. In October 1908, a new commander came to the cruiser - Captain 2nd Rank Klebe. Having undergone repairs in the winter of 1908-09, from February 1909, as part of the reconnaissance forces, the Koenigsberg participated in all maneuvers and exercises of the fleet, which lasted until November 27, when the cruiser went for repairs; there he was received by a new commander, Captain 2nd Rank von Troth, in the future - a famous admiral.

The 1910 campaign of the year began for the Königsberg with a collision on February 16 in the Kiel Bay with the light cruiser Dresden, which forced both ships to return to the factory to repair the damage. In March, "Königsberg" for four days (from 9 to 13) accompanied the imperial yacht while sailing along the Helgoland Bay.

From May 8 to May 27, 1910, the Koenigsberg, again in the wake of the Kaiser's yacht Hohenzollern, again arrived in England, where Wilhelm II had to attend the funeral of the English King Edward VII.

During the exercises of 1910, the Koenigsberg won the Kaiser Prize in the firing of light cruisers. From March 8 to May 22, 1911, the Koenigsberg, under the command of Captain 3rd Rank Henrich, accompanied the Kaiser yacht Hohenzollern, first on her voyage in the Mediterranean, and then on the first state visit of the imperial couple to the new English King George V.

On June 10, 1911, the Koenigsberg was replaced in the fleet by the light cruiser Kolberg, and on June 14 was put into reserve in Danzig. "Königsberg" returned to service only on January 2, 1913, replacing the light cruiser "Mainz", which required a lengthy repair. Under the command of Captain 2nd Rank Retzman, the Koenigsberg remained in service until June 19, 1913, when it was again put into reserve in Kiel. In the spring of 1914, the General Naval Staff ordered the Koenigsberg to be prepared for serving as a stationer in the waters of the eastern coast of Africa, and the gunboat Guyer located there was sent to the South Pacific Ocean. An additional ten 52-mm guns were installed on the Koenigsberg. The cruiser's boilers and engines were overhauled.

On April 1, 1914, a forty-year-old captain of the 2nd rank took command of the cruiser. Max



Loof. He was to lead the ship into African waters. After a bright "court" service in Germany, escorting imperial, royal and royal yachts, receiving the highest persons on board, the brilliance of gold, tinsel and precious stones, "Koenigsberg" was to serve in a place forgotten by God and people, in a climate where ships deteriorate equally quickly and people, and if they return to their homeland, then only in order to be scrapped and in the disability reserve.

Captain 2nd rank Loof was an Alsatian by birth. He was born only three years after this province was ceded to Germany as a result of the Franco-Prussian war. Alsations were not considered French, but they were not very considered Germans either. And although their rights were oathfully confirmed by various decrees of emperors and kings, they were left with more than enough room for an inferiority complex.

I

April 28, 1914 "Königsberg" left Wilhelmshafen, heading for the Mediterranean Sea. At that time, a division of German cruisers under the command of Rear Admiral Souchon, who held his flag on the Goeben battlecruiser, was in the Mediterranean Sea. Souchon also had the light cruiser Breslau at his disposal, but the divisional commander believed that he needed at least three light cruisers. So when Loof arrived aboard the Goeben to be presented to the admiral, Souchon ordered him to consider himself seconded to his division until further notice. A wise international military proverb advises never to rush to fulfill

received orders, because they can be canceled.

Captain 2nd Rank Loof was in no hurry to East Africa, the brilliance of the Mediterranean service, where German, British, French, Italian and even American warships met on the same raids, seemed to him more attractive. While Loof and the crew of the Koenigsberg enjoyed the delights of the Mediterranean Sea, Admiral Souchon waged an invisible battle with the Naval Headquarters in Berlin.

The command considered the appetites of Admiral Souchon as excessive, believing that one Breslau was enough for him. As a result, Berlin won, and the Koenigsberg was ordered to proceed to East African waters. On June 5, 1914, the cruiser passed through the Suez Canal and, after a one-day stay in Aden, on June 7 arrived in the capital of German East Africa, the city of Dar es Salaam, which was, at the same time, the common capital of numerous Zanzibar kings.

The territory of German East Africa was vast, exceeding a million square kilometers. The Germans began the development of this part of equatorial Africa as early as 1884, but the German expansion in this region immediately displeased England, which had to start long and tedious negotiations on the division of spheres of influence in East Africa.

Negotiations went on from 1886 to 1890, when, finally, the parties managed to agree; this gave the Germans the opportunity to formally name these African territories as German East Africa. In the north, the German colony bordered on British Uganda, in the south - on Portuguese Mozambique and British Central Africa, in the east - on the Congo.

In order to guard his enclave, surrounded on all sides by the British, it was necessary to have a strong formation of warships in German East Africa; however, it was possible to allocate to this area, and even then after a two-month altercation with Admiral Souchon,

only the light cruiser Koenigsberg, which, rather, showed a flag here than actually guarded anything.

Dar es Salaam, the "House of the World", once the main anchorage of the fleet of the Zanzibar kings, had one of the best bays in Africa, which was three miles long and a mile wide. The bay was connected to the ocean by a 300-meter long channel running between coral reefs. On the shore, which rose 15 meters above the sea and surrounded the bay in a semicircle, under the green crowns of coconut palms, the houses of the German colonists, of which there were no more than three hundred people, whitened.

The small German garrison was commanded by Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck. The city had a wharf and warehouses for the German East African Shipping Company, a small but well-equipped shipyard, and a railroad terminal leading inland to the mica quarries in the Urugulu mountains.

When the Koenigsberg entered the harbor, having saluted the flag on the signal mast of the local naval base, the old gunboat Gayer, which the Koenigsberg arrived to replace, and the hydrographic ship of the Navy Meve, were in the base for several years engaged here in the inventory of the banks and branches of the magical river Rufiji. Upon arrival, the captain of the 2nd rank Loof became the senior naval commander in the roadstead, and a special pennant was raised on the mast of the Koenigsberg for this occasion.

The commanders of the Gayer and Meve, captains of the 2nd rank Grasshof and Zimmer, arrived on board the Koenigsberg with presentations to their new commander. Grasshof had a trip to the South Pacific, and Zimmer had to continue the hydrographic work that had begun.

The arrival of the Koenigsberg in Dar es Salaam coincided with the anniversary. The garrison celebrated the 25th anniversary of the creation of the Kaiser's colonial troops. On behalf of the fleet, Loof presented the garrison with a model of the Schwalbe sailing-narcotic frigate, which was the first of the German ships to enter the bay of Dar es Salaam in June 1889, raising the German flag over the city.

On June 12, the Geier left for its intended purpose, and the Koenigsberg began to get acquainted with the new theater of its activity, measuring mainly the depths of countless coral islets and reefs.

"Meve" carried out hydrographic work in the channel near Mafia Island.

The news of the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo by Serbian nationalists, which caused a sharp escalation of tension between the main European states, forced Captain 2nd Rank Loof to return to Dar es Salaam. The Koenigsberg replenished its holds, and then entered the outer roadstead and began cruising along the coast, notifying the German coasters of the need to follow to Dar es Salaam. July 27 in Dar es Salaam, interrupting hydrographic work, came "Meve". Rumors of an imminent war were already sweeping the small colonial town. The governor tried to disprove these rumors by showing a telegram received from the Imperial Colonial Office in Berlin, which said: "The colony is out of military danger, reassure the settlers."

However, other messages came through the military and naval departments. The Admiralty notified Captain 2nd Rank Loof of the growing political tension in Europe, urging the commander of the Koenigsberg to be prepared for any development of events.

On July 31, the Tabora steamship of the East African line arrived in Dar es Salaam, announcing that tomorrow, August 1, a convoy of British cruisers from Rear Admiral King Hall was expected to arrive at the nearest British port of Zanzibar.

Otrad consisted of cruisers: Hyacinth, Estreya and Pegasus, all armed with 152-mm guns, while the Koenigsberg had only 105-mm guns. This English joy, which was part of the naval forces of the Cape of Good Hope, left Cape Town, on July 27, having received an order to detect the Koenigsberg, monitor it, and, upon receipt of the order to start the war, destroy it.

Fearing to be blocked in Dar es Salaam and mindful of his main task - to conduct a cruising war, Loof decided to leave the capital of German East Africa on the same day, leaving the commander of the Meve, Captain 2nd Rank Zimmer, in charge of the raid, who was supposed to organize everything work related to the mobilization of merchant ships in the harbor.

On July 31, at 16:30, Koenigsberg left Dar es Salaam, heading north to the Gulf of Aden, where all British shipping routes leading from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean converged.

With the onset of darkness, when the Koenigsberg was still further south of Zanzibar, signalmen noticed the silhouettes of three ships. Two of them went on the left side of the German cruiser, one on the right. In the latter, the English cruiser Pegasus was identified. "Koenigsberg" followed an economical course of 12 knots. Although no official announcement had yet been made of the outbreak of war, the last thing Loof wanted to do now was meet the British. The commander ordered to raise steam in all boilers to ensure maximum speed. Soon, the senior mechanical engineer of the Koenigsberg, Captain 3rd Rank Schilling, reported to Loof that the cruiser was ready to give a speed of 22 knots.

Luckily, there was a rainstorm here. Turning the ship to the south, Loof broke away from the British, sending the cruiser to the northern tip of Mafia Island. There, the ship turned north again, heading for the Gulf of Aden.

From the English cruisers Pegasus and Hyacinth they saw the Koenigsberg, but they could not keep up with it, reporting only that the German cruiser had disappeared in a rain squall on the southern course. Another English cruiser, the Darmouth, which was in the Bombay dock, was ordered to proceed to the east coast of Africa. The British command was very worried about the safety of the transports transporting contingents of Indian troops through the Gulf of Aden to the European theater of operations, and the disappearance of the Koenigsberg added to it a lot of headaches.

Rumors were very different. It was said that the Koenigsberg was heading to Colombo, and the entire squadron of Admiral Schlee was going to meet him in order to inflict a real massacre on all British shipping in the Indian Ocean. The British did not know anything specific about the whereabouts of the German ships in virtually the entire expanse of the world's oceans and fearfully awaited the start of a war that had not yet been declared.

## II

On August 5, 1914, at 22:00, a radio station in Dar es Salaam transmitted a message to the Koenigsberg that Britain had declared war on the German Empire. Continuing to move towards the Gulf of Aden, the Koenigsberg tried to warn the German merchant ships of the military danger by radio. At dawn on August 6, the silhouettes of two ships were noticed from the bridge of the cruiser.

"Ask for their ID with a searchlight!" Loof ordered.

"One of them is a passenger," the watch officer, Lieutenant Niemeyer, reported.

The senior officer of the Koenigsberg, Lieutenant Commander Koch, meanwhile, was carefully examining the second ship through binoculars. On a signal from the Koenigsberg, the ship immediately slowed down, and responded to the demand to identify itself with completely incomprehensible bursts of Morse signs. This was followed by readable information saying that the ship was Japanese, owned by the Nippon Yusen Kaisha company.

Captain 2nd Rank Loof ordered to come closer, illuminate the brand on the pipe and the name on the stern, to make sure that the ship transmitted true information. Convinced of this and admiring the intricate scattering of hieroglyphs on the stern of the ship, Loof ordered the Japanese to be released as a representative of a neutral state and ordered to catch up with the second ship leaving towards Aden.

Behind the stern of the Koenigsberg were two German steamships, which Loof called to him with a warning radiogram about the outbreak of hostilities. One of them was the North German Lloyd's Zieten pocketboat, and the second was the Hansa steamship Goldenfels. The latter even had to fire a warning shot, because, mistaking the "Koenigsberg" for an Englishman, he tried to get away. Having appointed a rendezvous to the steamers as a signal, the Koenigsberg chased the second ship, leaving in the direction of Aden. This ship turned out to be the British steamer City of Winchester, with a carrying capacity of 6,600 brt, with a stage cargo of tea from Calcutta. Convinced of the excellent technical condition of the captured steamer, Captain 2nd Rank Loof decided to turn the City of Winchester into an auxiliary cruiser. A prize team was sent to the ship, and the Koenigsberg took its trophy to a bay near the small port of Bender Burum on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The Ziten (8021 brt, 14.5 knots) also came there, and a little later, another German steamer, the Ostmark (4400 brt), previously heading to Massawa. On board the Zieten was the replacement crew of the German hydrographic vessel Planet, returning home - 92 people, led by their commander, Senior Lieutenant Brox. All of them were transferred to the Koenigsberg, along with most of the Zieten crew, on which only 28 crew members were left, since there were many British and Australian passengers on the ship who needed to be delivered somewhere.

Soon "Ostmark" went to Eritrea. The Ziten with the City of Winchester entered the Curia Muria Bay at Cape Hallania, where a German steamer loaded 400 tons of coal from an Englishman, which eventually allowed him to reach neutral Mozambique. Koenigsberg itself also already had problems with coal, and Loof was waiting for the approach of the Somali coastal steamer with 1200 tons of coal, which should have been expelled from Dar es Salaam by the senior captain of the 3rd rank Zimmer, commander of the hydrograph Meve ".

While Loof was enjoying the fruits of his hunt, the English were not sitting idle either. Admiral King Hall, having not found Koenigsberg, turned back with his detachment to the Cape of Good Hope, but, having received a "warning" telegram about the possibility of starting a war in the next 24 hours, sent the Pegasus and Estreya cruisers to the entrance to Dar es Salaam. The admiral knew that there was no Koenigsberg in Dar es Salaam, but he was worried about the Meve hydrograph and the large Tabora postal and passenger steamer with a displacement of 8000 tons located there.

The British command had information that the Tabora would be converted into an auxiliary cruiser with the outbreak of war. Recently. July 30, the steamer called in Zanzibar. An airplane was seen on its deck. From Zanzibar, Tabora left for Dar es Salaam, where she was now. On the morning of August 8, the inhabitants of Dar es Salaam were awakened by the thunder of artillery fire. The English cruiser Estreya, approaching the entrance to the harbor, opened fire on the radio station and ships in the harbor. The day before, after receiving

a message about the outbreak of war with Germany, Admiral King Hall ordered the Estreya to "close the port in Dar es Salaam and destroy the radio station." In Dar es Salaam, Colonel Lettow-Forbeck and Captain 3rd Rank Zimmer were waiting for the British cruisers to break into the inner harbor and land. To prevent this, a floating dock was flooded in the entrance channel, and the captain of the 3rd rank Zimmer ordered the Meve to be blown up out of harm's way. Estreya's shells sank two coastal steamboats in the port and damaged the Tabora.

However, this no longer mattered much, since the harbor of Dar es Salaam was blocked by a dock flooded in the canal, and, at least for the near future, could no longer serve as a base for Koenigsberg.

The base was the main thing that the Koenigsberg needed, forced from the first days of the war to wander around the deserted bays like pirates of the old days, who were much easier because they did not need coal or engine oil. There was already about 80 tons of coal on the cruiser - less than two days. The last 400 tons taken from the steamer City of Winchester were given to the German steamer Goldenfels, leaving for Sumatra.

I had to part with the dream of turning the City of Winchester into an auxiliary cruiser, and on August 12, Loof ordered the captured ship to be sunk.

Fortunately, on August 14, the Somali reached the Kuria-Muriya Bay with a cargo of coal, but the loading had to be urgently interrupted, because the radio operators heard the conversations of two British warships somewhere nearby. "Koenigsberg" reached the port of Ras Hafun on the coast of Italian Somalia, with only 70 tons of coal in the bunkers, which was barely enough for a two-week wait for the arrival of "Somalia". Due to the strong oncoming monsoon, the ship could go at a speed of no more than 2-3 knots and reached Ras Hafun on 21 August.

The Koenigsberg received 850 tons of coal and put to sea on August 23, heading south towards Madagascar.

At dawn on August 30, a German cruiser appeared at Majungu on the northwestern coast of Madagascar, fired at the radio station there and again went to sea.

During several days of unsuccessful circling off the northern coast of Madagascar, Captain 2nd Rank Loof came to the conclusion that the task he had received to wage a cruising war against enemy shipping was impossible, mainly due to difficulties in providing the ship with coal. On the way to Madagascar, 60% of the coal received the day before was used up, and only 230 tons remained on Somalia. The cruiser's boilers and engines were in need of repair, and where this repair could be done was completely unclear, especially considering the fact that enemy cruisers were darting around.

On September 1, 1914, after an almost month-long and not very successful raid, the Koenigsberg entered the lagoon of the tiny atoll of Aldabre (near Madagascar) in order to take the rest of the fuel from the Somalia without interference. Having finished loading the coal, the Koenigsberg began to think what to do next?

After evaluating the results of the monthly activities of his ship, Captain 2nd Rank Loof was forced to recognize them as very unsuccessful. A lot of coal was used up, the ships of the British forces of the Indian Ocean and the guards of the Cape of Good Hope were alarmed like wasps, their own boilers and machines were worn out, and the result of all this was the capture of one British steamer, which in the end had to be destroyed along with a cargo of tea worth 5 million marks. !

And the need to clean the boilers and overhaul the machines has become absolutely urgent.

Loof assembled a "small military council", which included his first officer lieutenant commander Koch and the highly experienced captain of the Somalia. Germ. The main topic of the meeting was the question: where can repair work be carried out in a calm atmosphere? Is there a place where the Koenigsberg, standing without a move, will not be suddenly covered by English cruisers? The only base on the coast - Dar es Salaam - fell away automatically. Even if the enemy cruisers had not blocked it, it would not have been possible to get there because of the dock flooded in the channel.

Recently arrived in East Africa, Loof did not yet know many secluded places on the coast, and therefore he was waiting for a response from his more experienced subordinates.

"As far as I know," replied Captain Germ, who sailed for many years on the ships of the East Africa Company, "there is only one such place, and this is the Rufiji River Delta."

"The Rufiji Delta?" Loof asked, and glanced at the map.

At first glance, it was clear that the Rufiji Delta was, to put it mildly, not yet fully explored territory. On the general map of German East Africa opposite the Rufiji Delta, located only a few dozen miles north of Dar es Salaam, was the inscription: "The exact contours of the coastline and depth

unknown."

Fortunately, just before the Koenigsberg left Dar es Salaam, the cruiser received the results of unfinished work on sounding the depths in the Rufiji delta, carried out before the war by the now-flooded hydrographic vessel Meve. The three officers were bending over a map of the river delta with the depth data from the Meve report.

"With our usual draft," Loof said not very confidently, "taking into account the consumption of coal, we can enter the Ssimba-Uranga branch, and then along the Ssusinga channel we can reach this places."

The commander put a circle on the map near the Negro village of Ssalale.

"I think it's too risky," said Lieutenant Commander Koch. "Never before has a ship of the size of ours, and with such a draft, entered the mouth of the Rufiji."

"So we will have to be the first," Captain 2nd Rank Loof sighed. "However," he turned to Captain Germ, "what else can be done in a situation like ours, Herr Captain?"

"Nothing," the captain of the Somalia replied with conviction.

"It's decided," Captain Loof put an end to the discussion. "Let's go to the Rufiji Delta."

### III

The capricious African Rufiji River, originating from the Levinson Mountains and flowing into the Indian Ocean, at its mouth diverges into 12 branches, forming a delta 65 kilometers wide. Of all the branches of the delta, two can be considered full-flowing: Kikuniya and Ssimba-Uranga, along which a ship with a draft of up to 5 meters has a chance to go upstream by 12-15 miles.

The depth of the water in the river increases markedly during the season of tropical spring showers, and in the southern hemisphere, spring was just coming into its own. All the shores of the delta were overgrown with virgin tropical forests, which made it possible to hide even such a large ship as the cruiser Koenigsberg from prying eyes.

On September 3, 1914, the Koenigsberg rounded Mafia Island from the north, which lies opposite the mouth of the Rufiji, and headed south. The navigational officer of the cruiser, Lieutenant Commander Hinrichs, did not feel very comfortable. He had to navigate a ship 114 meters long between treacherous underwater reefs and numerous sandbars, without having any accurate maps. Nevertheless, the Koenigsberg happily passed the reefs blocking the approach to the Mafia Canal, and, waiting for the tide, entered the Ssimba-Uranga branch. Passing between two islands, overgrown with huge trees and an impenetrable wall of tropical greenery, Captain 2nd Rank Loof ordered to turn sharply to the left, directing the cruiser into one of the channels of the Rufiji delta, which was called Ssusinga.

"Koenigsberg" walked along the channel carefully, at the slowest pace. Ahead of the cruiser was a boat, on which the sailors constantly measured the depth of the winding fairway, reporting data to the cruiser. An hour later, from the cruiser, they saw a small native village on the shore, lying in a clearing among the impenetrable jungle. A German flag was hoisted over a luxurious bungalow that stood right there.

"We are in place," the navigator reported.

"Give up both anchors!" Loof ordered.

After a long maneuvering, the Koenigsberg managed to get to the ancient pier, located on piles driven into the muddy bottom of the river opposite the village of Ssalale. Over the next few days, work was in full swing on the cruiser. The machine team had to work especially hard. Stokers and machinists cleaned the boilers, repaired and sorted out the car. The rest loaded the ship with coal and other supplies necessary for corsair raids in the waters of the Indian Ocean. Coal was delivered to this place on a coastal steamboat by the former commander of the Meve hydrograph, Captain 3rd Rank Zimmer.

Captain 2nd Rank Loof still had a glimmer of hope that the British would recognize in this war the so-called "Congo Act" of 1885, which provided for the neutrality of African territories in the event of a war in Europe.

However, as early as August 18, the British government officially announced that the Congolese Act had no force in this war, because it wanted to quickly take over all the colonies belonging to Germany, wherever they were. However, Loof himself remembered the "Act of the Congo" only when he realized that he was in a very difficult situation. He did not think about it at all when he captured the British steamer City of Winchester, but for some reason he hoped that the British would not consider this an act of war.

During the forced parking of the Koenigsberg near the village of Ssalale, Loof for some reason very often recalled the "Congolese Act" of 1885, but, nevertheless, did not forget to equip signal posts to monitor the actions off the coast of British ships.

On September 17, Loof was informed of the appearance of a twin-tube enemy cruiser at the northern entrance to the Mafia Canal, which was identified as the Estreya. To the south, a three-tube cruiser was seen from observation posts, which could be the Hyacinth. It was clear from everything that the British, not knowing exactly where the Koenigsberg was, were searching for it. On Saturday, September 19, the twin-tube cruiser weighed anchor and sailed north.

"Went to Zanzibar for coal," Loof suggested confidently. "Let's try it there and

catch!

At nightfall on September 19, the completely darkened Koenigsberg left the mouth of the Rufiji River into the sea and headed north, following the coast towards Zanzibar. On the navigation bridge, together with the cruiser commander and the watch officer, stood the lieutenant of the reserve of the Kaiser fleet, the highly experienced captain of the Somali steamer, who thoroughly knew all the approaches to Zanzibar and played the role of a pilot in this case. At about 4 o'clock in the morning, the Koenigsberg approached the port. Captain 2nd Rank Loof intended to launch an attack from the southern passage - a relatively wide body of water between Chumbe Island and the Niyange reefs.

"All navigational lights out," Lieutenant Commander Hinrichs reported.

"That was to be expected," Loof grumbled in response.

In the dim pre-dawn twilight, the silhouette of a small warship, also carefully darkened, appeared on the port side of the Koenigsberg. The guns of the Koenigsberg slowly crawled along the side towards this, as yet unidentified, ship. There was complete silence, not a light was to be seen anywhere. The commanders of the Koenigsberg stood by the guns, waiting for the order to open fire. At 04:30, the Koenigsberg, being abeam the extinguished lighthouse on the island of Chumbe, turned north, following at a speed of 12 knots.

At 04:45, Captain Germ saw through binoculars the dim light of the guard lights on the reefs of Matwan and commanded the rudder: "Heading 45 degrees."

Until now, everything has turned out very favorably for the German raider. To the east, over the island, dawn was breaking, and the utter darkness of the night was beginning to grey. At 05:00, the Koenigsberg stopped the cars and moved on by inertia, without breaking the silence, being already 400 meters from the anchored small warship. At that moment, Captain Germ accurately identified him as the Helmut tug, which had recently served the ships of the German East African line.

"Heading 90 degrees," commanded Germ.

At that moment, from the bridge of the Koenigsberg, they saw a twin-pipe British cruiser standing at a distance of about three miles.

"Prepare to open fire! Loof commanded. - Raise the topmasts!

"Koenigsberg" began to lay down on a course of 315 degrees, and at the moment the turn was completed, the command "Fire!" followed.

It was 5:10 am on September 20, 1914. The pre-dawn silence on the roadstead of Zanzibar was broken by the thunder of a salvo of 105-mm guns from the Koenigsberg. The twin-tube British cruiser was literally bombarded with shells. For 15 minutes, "Koenigsberg" fired at the enemy quickly, and then turned on a course of 90 degrees, greatly reducing the rate of fire.

On the bridge of the Koenigsberg, they realized that nothing threatened them from the side of the British cruiser taken completely by surprise. Not a single return shot was fired from the English ship. A few minutes after the opening of fire by the Koenigsberg, a strong explosion was observed in the bow of the British cruiser. Most likely, it was an explosion of ammunition, raised to the deck for the bow guns. A minute later, the front tube was shot down, from which clouds of thick smoke poured - a sure sign that the English ship was trying to move. Over the next few minutes, the crew of the British cruiser, which was not the Estreya, as it was identified from the bridge of the Konigsberg,



and "Pegasus", began to leave in a panic his flaming and listing ship to the port side.

At 05:35, the Königsberg artillery officer, Lieutenant Apel, saw a white flag raised on the mast of a dying enemy ship. Loof immediately ordered a ceasefire. However, the smoke from the fires and the morning haze so deteriorated visibility that the Germans, not being sure of the surrender of the British cruiser, resumed fire, as a result of which the Pegasus capsized and sank a few minutes later.

At 05:50 "Koenigsberg", which fired about 300 shells at the enemy, ceased fire. On the English cruiser Pegasus, 33 people were killed, including two officers, and 59 people were injured. The commander of the cruiser, Captain 2nd Rank Ainglis, survived, but until the end of the war he was no longer trusted to command the ship. The surviving members of the crew were detained in the colonies for several years.

The British Admiralty carefully investigated the circumstances of the death of the Pegasus and came, perhaps, to the most correct conclusion that the disgusting state of service on it and the confusion of the commander.

Having ceased fire on the Pegasus, the Königsberg turned back and, already in daylight, fired at a very important radio station from a distance of 1500 meters. All shells hit the target, destroying the station's antenna, destroying a building, and killing 45 British colonial troops. At 07:15, the Königsberg passed the lighthouse on Chumbe Island and in the afternoon of the same day entered the mouth of the Ssimba-Uranga channel and anchored opposite the village of Ssalale. The British saw all these events somewhat differently.

"A Pegasus was stationed in Zanzibar at that time, returning from the coast near Dar es Salaam, where it obtained information about the disappeared Königsberg. closed anchorage like Mombassa, but his commander, having instructions to guard Zanzibar, decided to make repairs there. Although no suspicious radiograms were received, and there were no signs of the Königsberg being nearby, nevertheless, all possible precautions were taken. The guard armed tug "Helmut" was stationed in the southern passage, the cruiser's boilers were kept in readiness for two hours, the crew slept by the guns.

On September 20 at 05:25, the Helmut noticed a ship moving slowly in the passage and, not yet making out whether it was commercial or military, went to it to warn that it was forbidden for commercial ships to follow this passage. Having fired two shots at the tug, the ship raised the German war flag and increased speed. Helmut could not warn the Pegasus, which was standing near the city, about the appearance of the Königsberg, and the enemy, approaching 45 cables, opened fire, remaining out of reach himself, because Pegasus shells did not reach. Already after 8 minutes of the battle, all his guns facing the enemy were disabled. Having stopped shooting for 5 minutes, the Königsberg opened fire again and, maintaining it for about 20 minutes, turned around and left. He did not shoot at the city, he only destroyed an inactive radio station. The lighthouse and cable also remained intact, as did the large steamer, the Banfshire, with several thousand tons of coal. "Pegasus", having lost two officers and 29 sailors killed and 55 wounded and having large holes in the waterline, still kept afloat.

There were no hits in the car, which is why an attempt was made to jump ashore, but unsuccessfully: the cruiser rolled over and sank. Without inflicting great material damage with its hasty and unfinished raid, "Koenigsberg" achieved tremendous moral success.

The prestige of the English fleet in the waters of the East was greatly damaged, aggravated by the success of the Emden on the other side of the Indian Ocean.

#### IV

Meanwhile, the Koenigsberg itself was slowly walking along the Ssimba-Uranga branch, trying not to miss the turn into the Ssusinga channel. Max Loof at times felt as if he had gone insane or had been transported by some supernatural forces along with the cruiser entrusted to him somewhere in another lost world, as in the popular fantasy stories of Arthur Conan Doyle. The crowns of huge tropical trees almost grew together over the masts of the cruiser, which cut the swampy water channels with its stem. Clouds of birds circled over the ship with loud cries. From the nearby swamps came guttural cries and hordes of mosquitoes rose. The crocodiles, alarmed by the appearance of the steel monster, flopped loudly into the water and swam after a new competitor, suspiciously exposing their periscope eyes above the surface. Monkeys, jumping from tree to tree, loudly announced the jungle about the appearance of a previously unseen monster, smoking and sparkling with lights.

The Rufiji Delta itself was one of the wonders of the world. The twelve branches of the delta, flowing into the Indian Ocean, were connected with each other by numerous channels, creating an absolutely incredible natural water labyrinth, winding among countless islands overgrown with tropical greenery. The exotic of the place was supplemented by several native villages inhabited by blacks, whose development remained at the level of the Stone Age. And in the midst of all this, suddenly there was a first-class cruiser of the Imperial German Navy - a monster stuffed with gunpowder from the era of armor and steam.

After returning to the anchorage near the village of Ssalale, it turned out that in a dashing raid on the English base in Zanzibar, the Koenigsberg had completely ruined its engine installation. Several valves of the main steam pipeline cracked and completely failed. The body of the watermaker for boilers cracked and dripped. Repairing these damages was no longer possible for the cruiser's engine crew, but this could well have been done at the shipyard in Dar es Salaam. The question was how to get to this plant. Dar es Salaam was 80 miles by sea and 120 miles by land. By sea, for many understandable reasons, it was no longer possible to get there, especially with a broken car. English blockade cruisers would have easily dealt with the crippled Koenigsberg. So far, all that remained was to hide in the Rufiji Delta and find a way to deliver the damaged parts of the machine to Dar es Salaam and return them back to the ship. But how to do that?

Max Loof wandered around the poop, smoking one cigarette after another and sullenly looking at the coconut trees that surrounded the cruiser from all sides like a prison fence. And then the commander of the Koenigsberg was struck by a hunch: it is in these trunks that his only hope lies to restore his ship.

The natives, driven from the nearest villages, as well as "mobilized" from German farmers in the depths of the colony, began to fell tall palm trees, constructing giant sledges from their trunks, onto which they loaded tons of various parts of the engine and boiler facilities of the cruiser, sent for repair to the factory in Dar Es Salame. Incredible as it may seem, Loof was seriously planning to cut a 120-kilometer road through the jungle to Dar es Salaam and drag the worn parts of the machine installation to the factory. More than a thousand natives were harnessed to these sledges, who, under the astonished glances of the German sailors, singing some of their unknown songs,

they moved the terrible load from its place and began to drag it inch by inch through the thickets and swamps to Dar es Salaam. Loof, wasting no time, began to strengthen the entrance to the Suning Canal, where his cruiser was anchored.

The 52-mm guns and machine guns taken from the Koenigsberg turned the entrance to a quiet tropical canal into a real fortress. One and a half hundred people sent by Colonel Lettov-Forbeck helped to equip the gun and machine gun crews, and also created a whole network of coastal observation posts. This unit was named "Delta". Telephone lines, laid through miles of impenetrable thickets, swamps and winding channels, connected the Koenigsberg artillery control post with observation posts placed on special platforms on the tops of trees.

Meanwhile, sailors in boats darted along all the branches and channels, measuring the depths and drawing up a diagram of the possible maneuvering of the cruiser up to the northernmost of the channels, which had the name Kikunya. All measures were taken so that the Koenigsberg could fight and maneuver if it was detected by the enemy.

A month after leaving for Dar es Salaam, the exhausted natives dragged back the "sled" loaded with repaired parts of the ship's machine. The crew of the cruiser, jumping out on the upper deck, greeted the unfortunate Negroes with cries of delight. On the morning of October 30, 1914, Captain 2nd Rank Loof, having climbed onto the bridge of the Koenigsberg, ordered the re-assembled machine to be launched. The car was launched, smoke poured out of the three pipes of the Koenigsberg, and the commander of the Koenigsberg believed that he would be able to go to sea again this evening. However, just a few hours later, signalmen from coastal observation posts reported that they were seeing smoke from British ships approaching the Rufiji Delta on the horizon.

V

While Captain 2nd Rank Loof prepared and set up his base in the Rufiji Delta, preparing for new raids on British shipping lanes in the Gulf of Aden, the British also did not sit idle. The daring attack of the Koenigsberg on Zanzibar and the sinking of the Pegasus, which coincided with the no less daring attack of the cruiser Emden on Madras at the other end of the Indian Ocean, caused great confusion among the British command, disrupting all schedules for transporting Australian soldiers to the European theater of operations. New Zealand Corps and Indian colonial troops.

From now on, transports with troops could only follow in well-guarded convoys. There were not enough warships for protection, transport was idle in ports. After the death of the Pegasus, the British Admiralty transferred a whole detachment of warships to the eastern Indian Ocean. The light cruiser Chatham, with a displacement of 5,400 tons, armed with eight 152-mm guns and a speed of 25.5 knots, headed from the Red Sea to Zanzibar. The Weymouth light cruiser of the same type was deployed from the Mediterranean. Even the two old battleships Ocean and Goliath, armed with 12-inch guns, were sent to guard convoys in the Indian Ocean.

On September 30, 1914, a detachment of British ships under the command of the Chatham commander, Captain 1st Rank Sydney Drury-Low, began searching for the Koenigsberg along the entire coast of German and Portuguese East Africa.

British ships combed the coastal waters, but no trace of the Koenigsberg

could not be found. On October 9, the light cruiser Dartmouth, which arrived to reinforce the British detachment, stumbled upon the German steamer Adjutant. The steamboat was captured, despite the fact that its captain, Kaiser, protested vigorously, assuring that the Adjutant was in neutral Portuguese waters. But the German protests did not even receive a response from the commander of the Dartmouth.

On October 19, the commander of the Chatham, Captain 1st Rank Drary-Low, ordered to anchor in front of the small German port of Lindi. Under the cover of ship's guns, an armed landing of English sailors was landed on the shore under the command of Lieutenant Henson, who was fluent in German. The purpose of the landing was to check all the ships in the harbor. Henson carried out the orders of his commander without much enthusiasm. He did this for the third time without any results. There were several coastal steamers in the port and about the same number of native fishing boats, which Lieutenant Henson considered a waste of time to inspect. This time, the German steamship "President" (3335 brt, 10.5 knots) was discovered in the port of Lindi, on the flagpole of which there was a Red Cross flag.

"Pretends to be a hospital ship," the experienced Henson confidently declared, ordering a search of the ship. This could be guessed already because, apart from the flag, the steamer no longer had any identification marks required for a hospital ship. The boat approached the side of the ship, and armed English sailors climbed the storm ladder to the deck of the German ship.

"Protest"! - This was the first word that the captain of the "President" Schutt greeted Lieutenant Henson with, then adding: "My ship is under the flag of the Red Cross!"

"There is no need for you to protest, Captain," Henson replied conciliatoryly. "We will only check the ship's papers, inspect the ship and, most likely, leave you in peace."

Looking through the documents, collected in a folder in exemplary German order, Henson drew attention to a small piece of paper on which the word "Kenigsberg" caught his eye. Pretending that this piece of paper did not interest him at all, the lieutenant, nevertheless, read it. The paper turned out to be a receipt that in mid-September 1914, 500 tons of coal were delivered to the cruiser Koenigsberg. And below was written the name of the area - Ssalale. Having skimmed through the rest of the documents relating to the crew of the ship and its cargo, Lieutenant Henson demanded to see him all the maps that showed the coast of German East Africa.

"Cards?" asked Captain Schutt, looking in surprise at the English lieutenant.

"Yes, exactly the cards," Henson confirmed in a calm voice.

"Our maps are in the best possible order," Captain Schütt hastened to reply.

"I have no doubt about it," Henson said. "Since they are in perfect order, then it will be easier for you, Captain, to show them to me."

Examining the cards presented, Henson, first of all, drew attention to the inscriptions, which with purely Prussian pedantry were applied to the delta of the Rufiji River in red ink. Corrections made in red ink related to the depths in two branches of the delta: Kikuniya and Ssimba-Uranga. In the depths of the latter, Henson saw the name - Ssalale.

Having finished the inspection and going into the boat, Henson asked Captain Schutt to apologize for the trouble.

"There's nothing to be done, captain," the English officer sighed, "there is a war going on, and she has her own laws".

Returning to the Chatham, Henson immediately reported his discovery to Captain 1st Rank Drary-Low.

"Either this is data that we have been waiting for a long time," the commander of the Chatham suggested after listening to the report, "or this is some kind of German trick to mislead us."

And he immediately ordered to weigh anchor, heading for the Rufiji Delta. Arriving late in the evening at the mouth of the Ssimba-Uranga branch, Chatham anchored 6 miles from the coast. A lifeboat was launched with a squad of marines, who were ordered to conduct reconnaissance on the shore. The shore in this place was all overgrown with impenetrable tropical shrubs, behind which towered huge trunks of palm trees. One of the British Marines climbed to the top of the tallest tree and studied the area with binoculars. The green waves of the rainforest stretched out before him like a boundless ocean, criss-crossed in all directions by canals and channels. In one place, at a distance of about 6-7 kilometers, the observer noticed two straight, leafless pillars sticking out of the greenery, similar to stumps of palm trunks or some kind of columns.

"Are these masts?" thought the observer, examining these suspicious elements that do not fit into the surrounding landscape. Looking closely, he saw on these pillars thin lines of yards and gaffs. There were no more doubts! Quickly descending, the marine reported to the commander of the landing group: "Two ships' masts are visible in the direction of the southwest, sir! One looks like a merchant ship's mast, the other looks like a warship's mast, sir!"

A message about this was immediately transmitted to the Chatham, on which the combat alarm siren immediately howled.

"Finally, we found it! Captain 1st Rank Drary-Low announced happily. "Now let's not miss it!"

A radio message was sent to the British Admiralty about the discovery of the Koenigsberg. The next day, an answer came from the Admiralty containing an unequivocal order: "Destroy the Koenigsberg at any cost." The radiogram was personally signed by Admiral Fischer, who on that very day took the chair of the First Sea Lord after a "small earthquake" that occurred in the Admiralty, where on October 28, 1914, Admiral Prince Louis of Battenberg was removed from his post due to too high a percentage of German blood, which flowed in the veins of the First Lord.

The Chatham continued to rock lazily at anchor opposite the mouth of the Rufiji. Soon two more British cruisers approached there: the Darmouth and the Weymouth. From that moment began the blockade of the mouth of the Rufiji River.

## VI

The pre-dawn silence of the first November morning in 1914 was broken by the thunder of volleys. Over the protected area of the Rufiji delta, scaring away birds, monkeys, crocodiles and anacondas, 152-mm shells of the light cruiser Chatham swept whistling, firing at the alleged Koenigsberg parking lot from a distance of 15 kilometers. Nothing could be seen from the bridge of the Chatham but a row of coconut trees fused between

the trunks of which writhed lianas and all kinds of exotic equatorial greenery grew wildly.

From the German observation posts they saw the Chatham, which, standing at anchor, blazed with her six-inch guns. But "Koenigsberg" because of the low water could not change the parking lot, and its guns could not shoot more than 12 kilometers. Therefore, the cruiser did not respond to British fire. It remained only to wait for further developments. English shells fell into the water, raising clouds of silt and drowning the fish, or with a deafening roar exploded in the thick of the jungle, knocking centuries-old trees to the ground.

It was clear that the British could not determine the exact distance to Koenigsberg, and they also did not have the opportunity to adjust their fire, on November 2, Darmouth and Weymouth approached the mouth. The Darmouth, which had a shallower draft than the Chatham, could maneuver within two miles of the exit from the Ssimba-Uranga arm. On Chatham, by shifting the ballast, an artificial roll of 5 degrees was created to increase the angle of elevation of the guns.

At 06:00 on the mast of the Chatham, a signal went up to start the bombardment of the Koenigsberg by all the ships of the British detachment. A second later, a rain of 152-mm shells hit the area where, according to the Marine Corps scouts, the Koenigsberg was located. Bushes and trees were uprooted by shells and thrown high into the sky along with clouds of yellow smoke.

Several volleys "Kenigsberg" was covered. Columns of dirty water rose on both sides of the German cruiser, tree fragments and streams of mud rained down on her deck.

"Koenigsberg" actually touched the bottom of the ground and was unable to change location. Suddenly, a terrible explosion shook the jungle. The shock wave knocked many on the deck of the Koenigsberg off their feet. Several shells hit the Somalia collier, turning the steamer into flaming wreckage. A huge column of black smoke rose high into the sky above the jungle. Loof slammed his fist on the bridge railing in desperation. The smoke from the destroyed "Somalia" leaving in the sky carried away the last chance of "Koenigsberg" to break out of this trap. On the "Somalia" was overloaded from the pits of the cruiser 800 tons of coal. "Koenigsberg" kept only 200 tons in bunkers, so that the shallow draft would give him the opportunity to maneuver in the shallow channels of the Rufiji delta.

On November 3, having waited for the water to rise, the Koenigsberg left its place near the village of Ssalale and moved 1000 meters deep into the Ssusinga channel, thus trying to go beyond the range of fire of the British guns.

The captain of the 1st rank Drary-Low tried to attack the Koenigsberg with a small destroyer at his disposal, but at the entrance to the mouth he was met with such deadly artillery fire that he was forced to retreat. The commander of the Chatham tried to contact the command of the ground forces, asking them to send army units to destroy the German coastal defenses deployed by Loof at the mouth of the river. The news that the commander of the blockade forces learned at the same time was truly shocking.

Two days ago, the British made an attempt to invade the territory of German East Africa, launching an offensive by the Indian Expeditionary Force from Mombasa to Tanga. The Indian troops were smashed to smithereens by Colonel Lettov-Vorbeck's detachments, which consisted of 200 German and 2,000 native soldiers. The troops had to be withdrawn back to Mombasa, and the ground command was no longer willing to risk them anywhere, and even more so in the Rufiji Delta. The next day, taking advantage of the new rise in water, the Koenigsberg climbed even deeper into the labyrinth of canals and the channel of the Rufiji delta, where

stayed at anchor (with short breaks) right up to 18 December. Seeing that he had not yet reached the Koenigsberg, Captain 1st Rank Drary-Low decided at least to try to block the German cruiser in the river delta and cut off his access to the open sea. For this purpose, the commander of the Chatham decided to flood the Newbridge collier in the most full-flowing arm of the Rufiji.

On November 6, the auxiliary cruiser "Kaifons Castle" joined the detachment of the captain of the 1st rank Drary-Low, delivering the first seaplane to the place of operation. At dawn on November 10, the collier Newbridge, under the command of the senior officer of the Chatham, entered the Suning arm under the escort of the armed tug Duplex and steam launches from all British cruisers. Machine guns and improvised protection against bullets and shrapnel were installed on the boats. At the entrance to the river, the ships came under heavy fire from German rapid-fire guns and machine guns. However, the collier nevertheless reached the appointed place and was flooded. The collier's team was taken to the boats and returned safely, having suffered negligible losses. The first part of the operation was completed. "Kenigsberg" was locked in the river delta. But destroying it was not as easy as expected at the beginning of the operation. The high forest of the jungle reliably hid the German raider, preventing the cruisers from conducting aimed fire. We needed the help of the ground forces or an airplane for the bombing.

The hydroplane sent for this purpose was not suitable, there was nowhere to take free troops from. There was only one way out - to guard the Koenigsberg with cruisers, preventing the river from being cleared of obstacles.

A completely stalemate was created. On the one hand, the British cruisers could not, due to their draft, enter the mouth of the Rufiji, as well as get the Koenigsberg from the sea with the shells of their guns. On the other hand, the Koenigsberg was running out of coal, and it was no longer possible to bring it up because of the blockade of the river mouth.

However, Captain 2nd Rank Loof did not even think of giving up. To save coal, he ordered palm trees to be burned in furnaces, and on rowing and motor boats he organized patrols along all the channels of the delta, making sure that no one could get there unnoticed.

Captain 1st Rank Drary-Low had his own problems. Despite the fact that the commander of the British blockade forces reported to the Admiralty that the sinking of the Newbridge collier, the Koenigsberg was completely blocked at the mouth of the Rufiji, Drary Low himself strongly doubted this. It was worth looking at the map of the Rufiji Delta, as doubts were even more intensified. The branches and channels of the delta created four full-flowing mouths. The most northern was the mouth of Kiknunya, where the channels flowed: Kiknunya, Nyemsati and Nyaamfuko. To the south was Ssimba, where the full-flowing branches of Ssimba-Uranga, Watossa and Ssuninga flowed. Further south was the mouth of Kiomboni, where the Crombon branch flowed in, connected by the channels of the Watossa with the mouth of the Ssimba and the branch of the Bumba with the southern mouth of the Mssala. Full-flowing branches of Nyyambwa and Nkvarani flowed into Msala. And all of them were connected with each other by systems of canals and channels in such a way that there was a real danger that the Koenigsberg would go out to sea from this magical labyrinth on one of the moonless nights. Moreover, the captain of the 1st rank of Drary-Low again did not know exactly where the Koenigsberg was located in the winding passages of this labyrinth infested with snakes and crocodiles. Fortunately for the British, the age of aviation was already beginning. Not far from the scene, on the tiny island of Niororo, civilian pilot enthusiast Dennis Cutler was enjoying life. He owned two battered Cartis floatplanes that he flew over the jungle and the sea to his heart's content. As soon as the epic with the Koenigsberg began, Cutler was immediately declared called up for active service in the Royal Navy, and his hydroplanes were confiscated for the needs of the fleet according to the laws of war. The pilot and one of his aircraft were taken to the scene by the auxiliary cruiser Kinfons Castle.

Dennis Cutler undoubtedly possessed a prowess that only the world's first pilots could boast of, paving the way for mankind into the sky. He was also a patriot of "good old England", which suddenly began to need his services.

On November 15, having assembled his, as it was then called, apparatus, Cutler took to the air, but, having neither maps nor a compass, he immediately lost his bearings and made an emergency landing near a tiny nameless island. There, the brave pilot was discovered by the Kinfor Castle and towed back to the parking lot of the ships of the blockading squadron. As a result of a forced landing, Cutler's seaplane leaked, and the pilot repaired it for the next two days.

On November 18, after two unsuccessful attempts, Cutler nevertheless lifted his old Cartis into the air and, with a strained engine chirping, flew over the crowns of palm trees and mangroves.

The aircraft was single-seat, so Cutler had to perform the duties of both pilot and observer. From positions hidden in the thicket, the Germans opened machine-gun fire on Cutler. Ignoring the fire, Cutler admired the magical panorama of the Rufiji Delta, not realizing that he was the first person in the world to see this natural wonder from a bird's eye view. Hundreds of channels, channels and sleeves, sparkling in an emerald setting of tropical greenery, captured the pilot's attention so much that for a moment he forgot why he was risking his life on this flight.

The explosion of an anti-aircraft shell almost directly below him brought Cutler back to reality. The car was thrown up, and at that moment the pilot saw the pipes and masts of the Koenigsberg sticking out of the mangrove thickets of the Kikunya channel, about eight miles upstream of the river.

Before Cutler had time to mark the place of the Koenigsberg on the map, the engine of his plane failed, and the pilot had to make another emergency landing, in which the ancient Cartis fell apart. The remains of the aircraft were again towed aboard the Chatham, where Cutler reported the situation to Captain 1st Rank Drary-Low.

Glancing at the map, the commander of the Chatham shook his head dubiously, deciding that the civilian pilot had made a mistake. The place he marked was at the confluence of two swampy channels, too shallow for a ship with such a draft as the Koenigsberg to get there. The Admiralty shared Drary-Low's doubts and ordered an experienced observer to be sent on a reconnaissance flight. But Cutler's plane broke down completely, it was already impossible to repair it. We had to wait for Cutler's second hydroplane to be delivered to the scene.

While the ships were waiting for the second seaplane of the brave Dennis Cutler to be delivered to the Rufiji Delta, the old ironclad Goliath joined the detachment of Captain 1st Rank Drary Low. His machines could only be dreamed of in any naval mechanic's nightmare, and the fireboxes devoured more coal than all the other ships of the detachment combined. But the battleship was armed with four 305-mm guns, and this circumstance had to be taken advantage of somehow. Therefore, waiting for exact data on the location of the Koenigsberg, the British command decided to send several ships to bombard Dar es Salaam.

By this time, the British had received information that the floating dock in the Dar es Salaam canal, which was flooded by the Germans at the very beginning of the war, did not completely close the entrance, and that German steamships standing in the harbor could go out and block the English harbors in Mombassa and Kilindini. Therefore, it was decided to destroy them, and at the same time withdraw all coal lighters and small vessels that could be used to supply the Koenigsberg. The operation was supposed to be carried out with the help of landing under the cover of artillery fire from the battleship Goliath and the equally ancient cruiser Fox.

On November 28, when the ships approached Dar es Salaam, the Germans raised a white



flag of parliament, and the acting governor arrived on the cruiser Fox. After listening to the requirements of the British, acting. governor left without giving a definite answer, referring to the fact that he had to hold a meeting with representatives of the military command. An hour passed with no response, although the white flag continued to fly from the flagpole. The cruiser commander ordered the boats with the landing party to fall off. The paratroopers put out of action three ships and several port ships, capturing their crews. No resistance was offered, but when the boats went back, fire was opened on them, despite the fact that the parliamentary flag remained raised. As a result, one sailor was killed, three officers and eleven sailors were wounded, and four officers and eight sailors went missing.

"Goliath" and "Fox" immediately began bombarding the city, turning the governor's palace and all the buildings surrounding it into ruins, which burned to the ground by evening. After disembarking the wounded in Zanzibar, the ships returned to Dar es Salaam. The cruiser Fox raised her parliamentary flag, but as no one came to the talks, the city and port were subjected to another bombardment. During the bombardment on the Goliath, an accident occurred in the car, and the old battleship went to Mombassa for repairs. The Fox cruiser, having completed the bombardment of Dar es Salaam, joined the detachment blocking the Koenigsberg.

On December 3, the auxiliary cruiser Kinfans Castle returned to the detachment, delivering Cutler's second floatplane. On December 4, Cutler made a test flight of his second Kartis, making a circle over the Rufiji delta and making sure that the Koenigsberg moved even further - to the confluence of the two Suning and Kiknunya channels. The Adjutant and Helmut tugboats sent upriver came under heavy fire from rapid-fire 52-mm guns and machine guns disguised in a thicket, which forced them to withdraw. On December 6, Captain 1st Rank Drary-Low settled down in the cockpit of a seaplane next to Cutler and decided to fly personally for reconnaissance, since the Chatham commander still did not trust the data of a civilian pilot. Cutler made a bet with Drary Low that they would crash on takeoff—his ramshackle Cartis wouldn't lift two. "We are all just guests on earth," the Chatham commander quoted the scripture and ordered to take off. They took off safely and banked sharply over the fantastic panorama of the Rufiji Delta. It was very difficult to see the Koenigsberg, whose sides, superstructures and masts were painted green, but Drary-Low had an experienced sailor's eye and was able to make sure that all Cutler's data were absolutely correct. He was also convinced that the Koenigsberg was completely free to move through its water labyrinth and could break out into the ocean again on any sufficiently dark night.

Drary-Low, unfortunately, did not know that Koenigsberg did not have coal for this. There was only one way out: to continue to carry out guard duty, blocking all 65 kilometers of the mouth and continuing to monitor the Koenigsberg from the air, while waiting for the approach of ships that could reach and destroy the German cruiser in its lair. However, the plans of Captain 1st Rank Drary-Low to systematically monitor the movements of the Koenigsberg from the air were not destined to come true. On December 10, when the brave enthusiast Dennis Cutler once again took his last seaplane into the air, his engine was cut off right on the turn. With great difficulty, the pilot managed to land the car in the Suminga canal, where he was taken prisoner by the Germans. The crashed seaplane was swept away by the fast current ocean.

And on the "Koenigsberg" itself, they also did not expect anything good for themselves. The only hope was to get coal from somewhere outside and try to break out into the ocean. But where? Only to certain death.

There was only one way out: to remain in the Rufiji Delta and continue to draw on a large number of ships and auxiliary vessels of the English fleet.

But worst of all was not the expectation of some miracle, and not even the awareness of the hopelessness of their situation, but the sizzling equatorial heat. Every day the sun turned the steel hull of the cruiser into a crematorium furnace, the paint on the bulkheads of the interior melted and, flowing down, hissed on the hot decks. She dripped from the ceiling, seriously burning people. It was impossible to sleep below, but it was no better on the upper deck: clouds of mosquitoes from the neighboring marshes, together with poisonous fumes, brought malaria and tropical fever aboard the cruiser. Water teeming with bacilli caused outbreaks of dysentery. Quinine and other drugs were sorely lacking. What did not threaten the crew of the Koenigsberg was death from starvation. In this respect, the Rufiji Delta was an earthly paradise. Entire families of hippopotamuses splashed in the nearest channels, whose meat differs little from beef in taste and nutritional value. The streams were full of fish, and the mangroves were home to millions of birds. Whole broods of wild pigs roamed the jungle, bred here due to the lack of natural enemies.

However, even here it was not without incident. A squad of hunters under the command of combat non-commissioned officer Bergman tried to shoot a large female hippopotamus. The meat of the females was much more tender than that of the males. While the hunters were getting closer to the prey, an angry male attacked the boat from the coastal thickets. With blows of powerful paws and jaws, he broke the boat. Three sailors were seriously injured, the hunt failed. Captain 2nd rank Loof was glad at least that no one died.

However, there were dangers everywhere. Exhausting heat drove people into the water, teeming with crocodiles. But it was still possible to fight the crocodiles by setting up armed posts that drove off the huge reptiles with rifle shots. Worse were the tiny fish, which immediately penetrated the natural openings of the human body, from where they could only be removed by surgery. Some unknown larvae penetrated into the nose, mouth and ears, which, rapidly developing in the body, led to death in terrible agony. Dwelled in the waters of Rufiji and a terrible "sea hair" that pierces a person through and through. The natives confessed to the sailors that they never bathe in the river, they only douse themselves with water on a specially constructed platform. Water in a vessel, preferably transparent, must be carefully considered before pouring over yourself. After interrogating the captured pilot Cutler, Captain 2nd Rank Loof found out that the battleship Goliath was located off the coast of East Africa, whose 305-mm guns were capable of smashing the Koenigsberg to shreds with one hit. Where the Goliath is now, Cutler did not know, but just in case, Loof decided to change the cruiser's parking lot.

On December 18, the Koenigsberg rose even higher upstream, standing between the branches of Komboni and Bumba - right in the middle of impenetrable mango thickets, behind which an exotic native village was hiding.

Meanwhile, Christmas was approaching, and with it the new year 1915. On the Christmas holiday, Captain 2nd Rank Loof ordered the sailors to be given stew, beer and schnapps from the last stocks. On Christmas Eve, Koenigsberg received a radiogram from Chatham in clear text: "Koni, we wish you good fun. We will be glad if you do not spoil our Christmas drinking in any way. Loof never responded to this joke. Even at Christmas, let the English know that the service is not honey. However, on December 31, the radio station of the English cruiser sent another radiogram to the Koenigsberg in plain text: "To the cruiser Koenigsberg. We wish you happiness and all the best in the New Year.

We hope to see you soon." To which Loof replied, "Thank you. Same to you. If anyone wants to see me, come on in. I'm always at home". It is not known whether the captain of the 2nd rank Loof had such a subtle sense of humor, but the British appreciated his humor better than anyone else.

"Come in. I'm always at home". Where is this house located? The British command again had no idea where in the huge labyrinth the Koenigsberg was hiding. In such a situation, the blockade of the mouth of the Rufij could continue indefinitely.

For several months now, Captain 2nd Rank Loof had been diverting English warships from other theaters of operations as effectively as if he had already sunk them. And the situation continued to be a stalemate. It was very doubtful that "Konigsberg" could be starved out.

The area of operation covered a coastline of 400 miles. Someone remembered that with all this, the island of the Mafia continues to be in the hands of the Germans. The island was located near the mouth of the Rufiji, representing a convenient base for operations against the Koenigsberg, and Captain 1st Rank Drary-Low offered to capture it. The land command did not object, and on January 10, 1915, the auxiliary cruiser Kinfance Castle, which arrived from Mombassa, under the escort of the Fox cruiser, delivered six companies of native infantry to the island.

Mafia Island, which was defended by a garrison of six German and forty native soldiers, surrendered without resistance. In mid-January, Captain 1st Rank Drary-Low was replaced as senior naval commander of the blockade detachment by Captain 1st Rank Church, commander of the Weymouth cruiser that arrived to replace Chatham. Chatham, Kinfas Castle and Fox went to Bombay for repairs. In addition to the Weymouth, only the armed tugboats Adjutant and Duplex, as well as the old cruiser Piramus, which arrived from New Zealand to replace the Fox, remained to monitor the Koenigsberg.

At the end of the month, the Hyacinth joined the blockade detachment. The regrouping of forces, however, did not lead to any changes in the stalemate. Something had to be done, but no one knew exactly what. The improvisations began. To break the state of complete inactivity, on February 6, 1915, the former German tugboat Adjutant, armed by the British, entered the Ssimba-Uranga channel in order to destroy German defensive posts on the islets of the delta. The ship was commanded by Lieutenant Price, and his team consisted of 24 armed English sailors.

It ended very sadly. The soldiers and sailors who made up the calculations of the German defensive posts on both banks of the Ssimba-Uranga channel met the Adjutant with fire from rapid-fire 52-mm guns. After the first few shots, a cloud of steam escaped from the Adjutant, the ship lost control, went towards the coast, where it ran aground. The British crew of the "Adjutant" was taken prisoner by the Germans, and the steamboat itself was later refloated and towed to the parking lot. In the battle with the British, one sailor was killed and one was seriously wounded. The captured Lieutenant Price was taken to the Koenigsberg, where Loof interrogated the captured officer.

Price was stunned by the order and cleanliness that reigned on the Koenigsberg in such heat and humidity. He was especially surprised that a powerful radio station was still operating on the German cruiser. Under him, Loof contacted Captain 1st Rank Church on the Weymouth, offering to take the dead sailor along with the wounded.

The Koenigsberg team rejoiced. The little "Adjutant", so rudely and illegally captured by the English cruiser "Darmouth" in neutral Portuguese waters, managed to recapture from the enemy, taking two dozen prisoners in the process. There was some calm again.

The British placed navigation buoys at the mouth to mark the entrance fairways. At night, pro-German natives on their pirogues with oars wrapped in rags got to the buoys, cut off the buoys, and they were carried away into the ocean towards the ships of the blockade squadron.

In turn, the pro-English-minded natives made their way into the thicket and cut off the Germans' telephone wires connecting the fortified points on the islands of the delta with each other and with the "Koenigsberg". In mid-February, the blocking forces assembled almost entirely at the Rufiji Delta.

The Australian cruiser Pioneer and four armed paddle steamers arrived from the Cape of Good Hope. The auxiliary cruiser Kinfans Castle brought new seaplanes from Bombay. These machines did not at all correspond to the conditions of heat and humidity of equatorial Africa. Every seaplane takeoff could end in disaster. The pilots were literally playing poker with death. From the heat, the propeller laminations were peeled off, numerous rubber tubes in the motor burst, melted paint peeled off the floats, they immediately rusted and leaked. To top it off, there was not enough aviation gasoline. It was rare when it was possible to lift these machines into the air higher than a hundred meters. Rumbling strainingly over the river delta at a speed of 60 miles per hour, hydroplanes became easy targets for German machine gunners dying of boredom. Only by the grace of Providence, which took the English pilots under its protection, can one explain the fact that not one of them was shot down by the enemy or did not crash himself. Moreover, on their own initiative, pilots often attacked German posts on the islands of the delta, throwing homemade bombs and hand grenades at them.

Unfortunately, the pilots could not fulfill their main task - to detect the Koenigsberg, because they flew over the very tops of the trees and were not able to see the superbly camouflaged cruiser from such a height. But they discovered that the Newbridge collier, flooded in the fairway, could not serve as an obstacle to the Koenigsberg. The cruiser has any number of ways to go to sea along other branches and channels, especially now, during the equinoctial tides. Exactly the same opinion was shared by Admiral King Hall, who arrived on March 7, 1915 on the battleship Goliath to Mafia Island.

The huge guns of the Goliath were ready to destroy the Koenigsberg if anyone knew in which part of the labyrinth he was hiding now. Admiral King Hall, who had been ordered by the impatient Admiralty to personally lead the operations to destroy the Koenigsberg, hoped to finish off the German raider with the fire of the huge Goliath guns, correcting the old battleship's firing from the air. Since this proved impossible, the admiral was soon ordered to transfer the flag to the Hyacinth, and send the battleship Goliath to the Dardanelles.

Then Admiral King Hall decided to act in a different way. The last time "Koenigsberg" was seen was three months ago, and since then no one knew where he was. By a personally signed telegram, Admiral King Hall summoned the famous African hunter Peter Pretorius to the Rufiji Delta. Pretorius had hunted extensively in the Rufiji valley and delta in the pre-war years, had an excellent knowledge of the area, and could serve his country as a "special agent" in the fashion of Lawrence of Arabia.

Admiral King Hall, an avid hunter himself, had known Praetorius since before the war. A fast destroyer brought the famous hunter aboard the Hyacinth, on which the admiral held his flag. King Hall received Pretorius in his salon and explained to the hunter the task assigned to him. Pretorius had to penetrate the labyrinth of the Rufiji delta and, above all, find the Koenigsberg's parking lot. If possible, he had to find out the state of combat readiness of the cruiser, the problems with which

collides with the crew, the cruiser's supply system with coal, food and ammunition. In addition, he had to make depth measurements in the channels closest to the Koenigsberg parking lot during high and low tides, and also try to uncover the scheme of the German defense of the Rufiji delta.

No white man in the world knew the Rufiji Delta better than Pretorius, and therefore only he alone could complete such a task. Knowing the languages and dialects of all the tribes inhabiting the Rufiji valley and delta, Peter Pretorius easily entered the labyrinth in a small boat, disguised as a native merchant. By the time Pretorius began to carry out the task entrusted to him, i.e. in early March 1915, it was already time to raise the quarantine flag on the Koenigsberg.

The sanitary conditions on the ship were terrible. Three-quarters of his crew suffered from malaria and dysentery. Several people have already died from malaria and black fever, and one sailor died when a crocodile cut off his leg. The food supply was running out. The crew lived on hippo meat and fish. It became more and more difficult to get hippos. The exterminated giants changed their habitat, and it was possible to find them only by chance. The mood was raised by a message from Berlin that on the way to them there was a ship with 1600 tons of coal on board, carrying, in addition, rifles, cartridges and other items of combat support to the colony. The latter were intended for the militia of Colonel von Lettow, choking from a lack of rifles and ammunition. It was decided that the ship going to their aid would first come to Tanga, where it would unload weapons and ammunition for the troops of Colonel Lettov. Then, having received notice of the arrival of this ship, the Koenigsberg, on one of the moonless nights, will break out of the delta into the sea and meet with the arriving coal miner at the agreed place off the coast of Portuguese East Africa.

Delighted sailors prepared the cruiser's vehicles and guns for the upcoming breakthrough, repainted the sides and superstructures. It was Pretorius who caught them doing this. He circled the labyrinth for a long time in search of the Koenigsberg, disguised as a native. The courage of the British intelligence officer knew no bounds. Several times he had to flee from the German patrols, hiding in the thicket, firing from two revolvers, with which Pretorius never parted.

Finally, he found the backwater of the river, where the Koenigsberg was defended. Even at close range, the ship was difficult to see, and even more so, to identify. Painted green, entwined with vines, camouflaged with leaves on the masts and bushes on the upper deck and above. construction sites, the ship completely blended into the surrounding jungle. The ocean cruiser has become an intricate forest fort of almost plant origin, miraculously still afloat. Praetorius went straight to the Koenigsberg, which had a lot of native pirogues. Loof mobilized the Negroes to do the hard work on board, sparing the strength of his tropical-sick sailors.

"Kenigsberg" stood with advanced shots, from which storm ladders descended to the water. The natives, riding up on their pirogues, were constantly scurrying back and forth along the storm ladder. Praetorius wormed his way into the crowd of boats and pirogue. He noted with interest that some natives, having settled down on their skiffs right at the side of the cruiser, were peacefully fishing, without causing any objections from the Koenigsberg watch. The scout began to regret that he had not taken the infernal machine with him. Apparently, the exhausted German sailors, in a sense, have already become fatalists. Spinning around on his boat under the shots of the Koenigsberg, Pretorius, from conversations with blacks and thanks to the keen eyesight of the hunter, learned, saw and understood much.

First, and most importantly, he learned that, despite the extremely exotic appearance, the Koenigsberg had retained full combat readiness: all its guns were operational and the crew was ready to fight. Ammunition is also lacking. The main problem is coal, but it

from somewhere they are waiting, preparing ahead of time for action. Pretorius did not find out exactly where the cruiser was waiting for coal from, but one could draw a simple conclusion: coal must be brought from outside. Moreover, the cruiser must go out to meet an unknown collier. Praetorius was so bold that, swimming up to the very bow of the cruiser and holding on to the anchor-chain with one hand, he measured the depth of the water under the bow of the ship. There were no doubts. At this parking lot, the Koenigsberg will not be able to bunker with coal without landing on the bottom of the ground. He will have to leave the saving Rufiji Delta and go to sea to meet the English cruisers that have been waiting for him for a long time.

Insolent crocodiles and whole flocks of exotic fish darted around the German cruiser. Above the masts of the raider, clouds of birds living in the delta swirled with loud cries. Annoyed by the unknown alien, they never reconciled themselves to the presence of the steel monster on their territory, expressing loud discontent all daylight hours. Pretorius thought that the Koenigsberg could have been detected for a long time by one cluster of birds above it, which, among other things, he reported to Admiral King Hall, returning to the Hyacinth after the successful completion of his dangerous mission.

## VIII

And sharks circled around the blockade detachment of English cruisers, always accurately determining the time when people were going to kill each other. So, Koenigsberg was discovered again, but what to do next was far from clear. In addition, the news that the Koenigsberg was expected to get coal from somewhere and break into the sea seriously alarmed the British. Where does this ship come from and how does it intend to transfer coal to the Koenigsberg? What are the future plans of the cruiser commander? To secure it, the British announced a blockade along the entire coast of German and Portuguese East Africa, advising the Portuguese not to get out too much with protests. All steamships, including the coasters of local lines, were ruthlessly stopped and searched by the British, although it was obvious that they could not go to the aid of the Koenigsberg.

The steamer, which was so awaited on the "Königsberg" and which so unnerved the British, actually left Wilhelmshaven on February 15th. It was the former British cargo ship "Rubens", detained by the Germans in Hamburg at the beginning of the war. Sending it on a distant and adventurously dangerous voyage, the Germans disguised the ship as the Danish steamer Kronborg, whose home port was Copenhagen. The camouflage of the ship was thought out to the smallest detail. All the inscriptions on board were replaced with Danish ones, there was not even a single book in German on the ship. The team was paid salaries in Danish kroner.

The ship was commanded by Lieutenant Carl Christiansen. All Kronborg's documents were issued for the Uruguayan and Argentine ports at the mouth of La Plata, where the steamer was supposed to deliver a load of construction timber. The entire space of the upper deck was littered with logs, and lumber was stacked in the holds. The true cargo of the Kronborg was hidden under six meters of timber and consisted of 1600 tons of coal, 1000 shells for 105-mm guns, two 60-mm guns with a set of shells, 1800 rifles and carbines and 3 million rounds of ammunition. "Kronborg" was also supposed to deliver spare parts for machines, a welding machine, a supply of food, cigarettes, alcohol and sanitary and medical supplies to "Königsberg". For its own needs, Kronborg had 1200 tons of coal and 700 tons of water in tanks.

Former "Rubens" and fake "Kronborg" had a real name

"Blockade Breaker A", which was consistent with its mission, since the steamer had to first break through the blockade of the British in the North Sea, pass half the world, and then break through the blockade of the same British in German East Africa.

Leaving Wilhelmshafen, Blockade Breaker A went along the Norwegian coast, and at the latitude of the Sogne fiord turned west, heading for the passage between Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The weather was favorable to Christiansen, and on the night of February 23-24 he managed to sneak through the British sentinel lines unnoticed. A storm and a snow storm that had flown in from the northwest contributed a lot to the breakthrough, although they washed away some of the logs intended to mask the true cargo from the deck.

In the first days of March, the fake Kronborg passed through the Canary Islands, on March 6 passed the Cape Verde Islands, and on March 22, unnoticed by anyone, rounded the Cape of Good Hope. For this part of the journey, Lieutenant Christiansen had prepared another set of false documents saying that the Kronborg was carrying a cargo of timber from Sweden to Mombaesa. On the night of April 3-4, Blockade Breaker A established direct radio contact with Koenigsberg, and Captain 2nd Rank Loof informed Christiansen that he should go to the port of Tanga, located in the north of the colony, opposite Pemba Island. On the night of April 7-8, the Kronborg passed the Comoros and anchored off the Aldabra Atoll, awaiting further orders. On April 11, Lieutenant Christiansen received a ciphered radiogram containing an order to approach Tanga at dawn on April 14 and wait at the entrance to Mansa Bay for a boat with a pilot.

All these radio messages were intercepted by a powerful French radio station in Madagascar, which was immediately reported to Admiral King Hall. Wasting no time, the admiral on the cruiser Hyacinth hurried to Tanga, where he hoped to intercept the Kronborg. On the evening of April 13, Kronborg was 50 miles east of the northern tip of Pemba Island. The ship drifted, waiting for the onset of darkness, so that, under its cover, bypass the island from the north, enter the strait that separates the island from the mainland, and, with the first rays of dawn, stand at the entrance to Mansa Bay. The night was dark, and Blockade Breaker A, with its lights out, was moving at full speed through the blockade zone declared by the British.

Lieutenant Christiansen was calm. From the ciphers he received, he knew that only one lightly armed auxiliary ship, the Duplex, was patrolling the Pemba Strait, a former cable-laying ship that was slower than the Kronborg. Knowing about his advantage in speed, Christiansen was not very afraid of a chance meeting with a British guard. At dawn on April 14, Blockade Breaker A (Kronborg) was already at a distance of two miles from the entrance to Mansa Bay. From the nearby shore, the unbearably desirable smell of the earth reached the sailors, and in the east the dawn was blazing. The signalmen moved their binoculars, looking for the promised boat with a pilot.

The last stage of a long and perilous campaign was approaching. Another hour or two, and they would finally feel completely safe in a German port. Lieutenant Christiansen, showing nervous impatience, also raised his binoculars from time to time, surveying the horizon. When he did this again, he saw in the eyepieces a three-tube warship approaching from the south. English cruiser!

It didn't take much intelligence to understand this. His only cruiser (albeit also a three-pipe) could not yet leave his refuge in the delta. "Full speed ahead!" commanded Christiansen and, without any pilot, went at full speed deep into Mansa Bay.

Lieutenant Christiansen was aware of the hopelessness of his situation, realizing that sooner or later his ship would be sunk one way or another. Therefore, he decided that it would be better to flood the ship himself, closer to the shore, in order to save at least part of the valuable cargo.

The British cruiser, meanwhile, was rapidly approaching and from a distance of three miles opened fire on the German blockade breaker. Maneuvering under rapid enemy fire, Lieutenant Christiansen turned into shallow water, trying to get under the protection of the hilly coast. On the cruiser Hyacinth, which was firing at the Kronborg, at the moment the enemy was detected, a minor accident occurred in the right car, which gave the German steamer the opportunity to slip into Mansa Bay, hiding behind its high banks. However, the etched steam betrayed the location of the steamer, and the Hyacinth, approaching closer, opened fire on it. Entering the depths of the bay, the Hyacinth discovered that the steamer had stuck to the shore and was on fire, and sailors were jumping out of it onto the shore. Lieutenant Christiansen ordered to drop anchor, open the kingstones and set fire to the logs that still remained on the deck, dousing them with gasoline. After that, the crew left the blockade breaker.

The burning ship sank to the ground, with its nose to the shore. Lieutenant Christiansen and two sailors were injured. Meanwhile, "Hyacinth" sent a boat with a prize party to the burning ship. They found only maps and false ship documents that a Danish steamer was carrying a load of timber from Sweden to Mombassa.

It was not possible to do anything else, and Admiral King Hall decided to finish off the steamer with direct-fire artillery fire. The fire on the ship intensified, and after three hits, the admiral ordered to return to the Rufiji delta, believing that the blockade breaker and its cargo were finished.

As soon as the Hyacinth left, Lieutenant Christiansen and his men returned to their ship and quickly put out the burning logs on the deck. Most of the cargo delivered by Kronborg survived!

After some time, the British recaptured one of the villages from the militia of Colonel von Lettov-Vorbeck, where they captured a prisoner. He told them that he had seen with his own eyes how German soldiers received brand new rifles, and wagons loaded with artillery shells drove through the village. All this was obtained from some blockade breaker. The British immediately sent a destroyer patrol to Mansa Bay. The Kronborg, burned and broken by shells, lay in place, but its holds were empty. In addition to shells and coal, which the German lake ships on Tanganyika and Victoria badly needed, von Lettov-Vorbeck's militia received 1,700 rifles and 3 million rounds of ammunition, medicines, cigarettes and much more, including a set of Iron Crosses to reward the most deserving.

The death of the "Blockade Breaker A" at the very goal of his long and dangerous flight, finally destroyed the already not very good chances that the "Koenigsberg" would be able to escape from the trap into which he had driven himself. Although the next day after the flooding of the blockade breaker, German divers unloaded it at low tide, most of the coal that the ship was carrying for the Koenigsberg was impossible to get out of the holds under such conditions. And without coal, the Koenigsberg had no chance, taking advantage of its high speed, to escape from the Rufiji delta under cover of darkness, as it did on July 31, 1914, escaping from Dar es Salaam. And the fact that the cruiser Hyacinth appeared just at the moment when the blockade breaker was standing at the entrance to Mansa Bay, waiting for the boat with a pilot to approach, indicated that the British easily read German naval ciphers.

## IX

Soon the British received information about another German steamer coming to the rescue.



"Koenigsberg". However, the boat did not show up. It was assumed that he waited until the end of the month, when a period of high water was to come again, enabling the Koenigsberg to get out of the river. If this happened, then Admiral King Hall's squadron would hardly have been able to block the path of the German cruiser, since the Hyacinth could hardly give an average speed and required serious repairs. Therefore, the cruiser Cornwell, which arrived from England in Cape Town just a week ago, was urgently sent to the mouth of the Rufiji. The cruiser Chatham was also returning to the delta, having finally completed repairs in Bombay.

Patrol ships carefully searched all the islands of the Mozambique Channel in search of a second steamer, about which there were many rumors, but could not find anything. Under such circumstances, the need to put an end to the Koenigsberg as quickly as possible was felt more than ever. Short-type seaplanes sent from the metropolis also did not justify the hopes placed on them, mainly due to the equatorial heat and humidity. They could not rise high, and the plans of Admiral King Hall to use them for the bombing of the Koenigsberg failed again. Moreover, one of these planes fell into the sea on May 5 and crashed. Admiral King Hall began to plan a torpedo attack on the Koenigsberg, but the Admiralty did not allow him to risk destroyers. Ground operations, due to lack of forces, also subsided. There was no need to wait for help from India any more. All available troops were transferred to Mesopotamia. As a result, the operations against the Koenigsberg were again reduced to only maintaining the blockade, which the cruiser would certainly have easily overcome if she had coal.

But there was no coal. Lieutenant Christiansen, who was supposed to deliver coal to the cruiser and lost his blockade breaker at the very target, got overland to the Koenigsberg and informed Captain 2nd Rank Loof that he could not wait for help from anywhere else. War in the colonies on land was henceforth considered more important, and Loof was ordered to place 100 of his 313 men at the disposal of Colonel von Lettow. It remained only to wait for the end and meet it with dignity.

Meanwhile, the patience of the British Admiralty snapped. This state of affairs at the eastern end of the global sea route could no longer be tolerated, and the Admiralty decided to send two monitors armed with 152-mm artillery to the disposal of Admiral King Hall. When at the end of August 1914 the advancing German troops reached the coast of Flanders, the British began to use monitors for shelling from the coastal flank - flat-bottomed gunboats with heavy artillery, capable, according to their creators, of sailing even along the swan grooves of Kensington Park.

Monitors, as you know, appeared during the Crimean War and the American Civil War. Since then, they, like all other classes of warships, have been constantly improved.

Fortunately for the British, they began building monitors even before the war, commissioned by the Brazilian government, which needed such ships to patrol the channels of the Amazon and Orinoco.

In August 1912, the Vickers firm began building three ships of this class. They had a full displacement of 1520 tons, a length of 81.3 m, a width of 14.9 m and a draft of only 1.7 m. Two steam engines, powered by two boilers, reported to the monitor a speed of approximately 9 knots. The monitors were armed with two 152-mm guns, originally placed in the forward two-gun turret, two 120-mm howitzers, four 47-mm guns and six Hotchkiss machine guns.

All three monitors, named Solimos, Zhavari and Madeira, were completed by February 1914. However, Brazil failed to pay for them, and the ships lay on the Borrow River in Devonshire, waiting for a buyer. On the eve of the war, the British Admiralty,

fearing that the monitors would not fall into the hands of the enemy, they bought them at a price of 155 thousand pounds each, and on August 3, 1914, these ships became part of the Royal Navy. Of course, they were immediately renamed after the names of the British rivers: "Severn", "Humber" and "Mereya".

In October-November 1914, the monitors took part in operations off the Belgian coast, where they shot their guns to such an extent that in December the towers on the Severn and Mersey were removed, and instead of them, two 152-mm monitors were installed on the bow and stern of the monitors. guns, and on the sides - two 120-mm mortars. In addition, a 76-mm anti-aircraft gun was installed on each ship.

In February 1915, it was decided to send the Severn and Mereya to the Dardanelles, and in March-April both monitors were towed to Malta, where they were when someone in the Admiralty came up with the idea to use these ships against the Koenigsberg in the Rufiji Delta.

Having made this decision, the Admiralty ordered Admiral King Hall not to do anything until the arrival of the monitors, and at the same time withdrew the cruisers Chatham and Cornwell to the Dardanelles, leaving King Hall with only one cruiser capable of catching up with the Koenigsberg in the event of a breakthrough. blockade - Weymouth.

The preparation of monitors for a campaign in the waters of East Africa was carried out in exceptional haste. There was no one to tow them, so for most of the way the Severn and Mereya had to go on their own, for which they were completely unsuited. Designed for action on the rivers, these monitors, according to an eyewitness, actually consisted of one holds; and the one who designed living quarters on them was clearly happy that he would not have to live there.

On April 10, in accordance with the plan, a detachment of monitors under the command of Captain 1st Rank Eric Fullerton, who held the flag on the Severn, left Malta and, accompanied by the messenger ship Trent, four tugboats and coal transport, headed for Port Said.

Having miraculously made it through the spring storms that are common in the eastern Mediterranean at this time of year, both monitors were caught in the terrifying heat that prevailed over the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, when the temperature in their engine rooms reached 60 degrees Celsius, but, nevertheless less, May 15 safely arrived in Aden.

Two days later, Captain 1st Rank Fullerton again led the detachment to the sea. Sailing conditions along the African coast were extremely difficult. The monitors were overwhelmed by the waves and could not row out against a strong oncoming current. The Trent had to take them in tow, and the coal transport had to take small river tugs. However, the heroic dedication of the crews of the monitors and, especially, the engine crew made it possible to successfully complete this unprecedented campaign, and on July 3, 1915, the detachment anchored off Mafia Island.

There, in Tirena Bay, a base of blocking forces was set up, and an airfield was built on the shore, where four Farman-type bombers were deployed, which, according to the plan of the upcoming operation, were supposed to bomb the Koenigsberg, while simultaneously correcting the fire of the monitors. No sooner had the Severn and Mereya rattled the anchor-chain on the roadstead of Mafia Island, as the captain of the 2nd rank Loof learned about this from his scouts.

The fact that the enemy was going to use monitors against his cruiser, Loof knew in advance from a survey of captured prisoners. In particular, the former English commander of the Adjutant steamboat, Lieutenant Pierce, was the first to tell him about this. Being a realist, Loof understood that the final act of the tragedy was approaching. The destruction of "Koenigsberg" becomes

just a matter of time. But, being a military man, Loof, who had gone through a tough school of Prussian military-political education, was going to fight to the end.

Moreover, Loof had another surprise in store for the British. The cruiser had at its disposal a small river steamer "Vami", which at various times served either as a customs boat in Dar es Salaam, or as a crew boat for warships, or as a river passenger foundling. The crew installed a torpedo tube removed from Koenigsberg on Vami, armed it with two torpedoes and, under the command of Lieutenant Apel, on the night of June 4-5, they sent it into a torpedo attack on Mafia Island.

According to the plan, the boat was supposed to get into the roadstead of Tiren Bay and destroy both monitors with torpedoes. Vami was supposed to go out to sea through a rather shallow branch of Kiomboni, which could be reached from the Koenigsberg parking lot through a labyrinth of channels, most of which did not exist on the maps at all. Knowing about the shoals and rifts in the Kiomboni arm, the British did not really watch its mouth. On this, as a factor in achieving surprise, the main calculation was made. Late at night, Lieutenant Apel took the boat away from the side of the Koenigsberg and, in pitch darkness, began to wind along the channels leading to the Kyomboni branch. Knowing that the jungle was teeming with English scouts, they did not open any fires, guided by the compass and the stars.

Such a bold undertaking, unfortunately, did not succeed. At the entrance to the Kyomboni branch, a strong current threw the Vami onto the rocks, damaging the boat so badly that it was no longer possible to use it without major repairs. An attempt to take the initiative again failed.

It remains to be seen what the enemy will do. Preparing for the upcoming battle with monitors, only gunners and signalmen were left on the Koenigsberg. All the rest were decommissioned from the ship and sent to Colonel von Lettow at the disposal of the land front and to the impromptu flotilla of the great lakes.

The improvised destroyer "Vami" was removed from the stones, repaired and later sent to Lake Tanganyika on a railway platform. At the last moment, coastal posts were fortified, on which 37-mm guns taken from the Move and the Planet were additionally installed. On the "Koenigsberg" they shot the sleeve of Ssimba-Uranga.

About four miles below the Koenigsberg, in the middle of a branch of the river, was an island overgrown with mangrove plants. It was assumed that the monitors, if they entered the delta, would not rise above this island, opening throw-over fire at the Koenigsberg through the island, correcting it with the help of aircraft. All the cruiser's guns were aimed at an area approximately 200-300 meters below this island. Platforms were built on the nearest trees, on which artillery corrective posts were to be located. From empty barrels, imitators of minefields were made so that the British did not feel very comfortable in the fairway. Through spies, information was leaked that the Germans had mined all the branches of the Rufiji delta.

Everything seemed to be done, and Captain 2nd Rank Loof was looking forward to the last battle. He often quoted Goethe: "Better a terrible end than horror without end." This winged expression of the great German thinker, after the commander, all the sailors began to repeat "Koenigsberg". But days passed, turning into weeks, and the British did not appear.

X

After an unprecedentedly difficult campaign from Malta to Mafia Island, the English monitors needed, first of all, to put their machines and mechanisms in order. Then it was necessary to prepare their ships for battle: to equip the deck and sides with protection from shell fragments, to blind the control posts and, most importantly, to understand the combat mission assigned to them.

The task was as follows: by joint strikes of the artillery of the monitors and bombers of the bombers, destroy the German cruiser, who had taken refuge in the tropical thickets of the river, about ten miles from its mouth. Monitor crews worked around the clock, putting the cars in order. When they were established, exercises began in shooting at an invisible target. A wooden target was placed on the other side of the tiny island; "Severn" and "Mereel" fired at this target, and the aircraft circling above them was adjusting the fire.

All repair work and exercises were completed only by July 5, 1915. In order to divert the attention of the enemy, in the Dar es Salaam area, it was decided to conduct an imitation of a landing in order to capture the city. Transport "Laurentik" with great noise, to the music of the ship's orchestra on July 5, landed several units of Indian infantry in the Dar es Salaam region, led by "bulldog-like" British sergeants. Having made some noise and shot from the heart, with the onset of darkness the paratroopers returned to the transport.

In the dead of night from July 5 to July 6, Captain 2nd Rank Loof was awakened by the messenger. The cruiser commander jumped up from his bunk. The watch officer who entered his cabin reported:

"Mr. Captain 2nd Rank, a telephone report has been received from an observation post between the mouths of the Ssimba-Uranga and Msunga. At least 15 enemy ships are approaching the delta."

"It starts! Loof said. "Everything is in place!"

At 5:20 am on July 6, 1915, the Severn and Mereel monitors entered the Ssimba-Uranga branch and, cutting the muddy waters of the great African river with their blunt stems, began to rise upstream. Aircraft appeared over the delta, which were supposed to bomb the Koenigsberg until the monitors reached the firing position.

No sooner had the monitors entered the river than one of the cannons camouflaged in the surrounding jungle barked grimly in their direction. The explosions scared away the crocodiles, which crawled lazily in the silence of the tropical night along the river bank. They splashed noisily into the coastal mud and plunged into the dark water. A few minutes later, most of them surfaced, stunned, belly up.

The battle began, flaring up with every minute. Numerous 52- and 47-mm guns, camouflaged at the defensive posts of the Delta Detachment, bored on their miniforts for half a year, opened furious fire on the monitors that appeared. They were echoed by bursts of heavy machine guns and burst rifle fire.

Following the monitors, the paddle steamers Echo, Fly and Childers entered the canal.

Firing from both sides at German strongholds, they slowly moved upstream, suppressing enemy artillery and machine-gun nests. Behind them, destroying the German defenses, the Weymouth cruiser entered the mouth of the Ssimba-Uranga.

Slowly and majestically, he "crawled" over the sandbar, opening fire on the German observation posts on the heights of Kumbini.

The light cruiser Pyramis, having bypassed the flagship, climbed up the river for about a mile, leading

fire from both sides on the mangroves, quickly leading to silence the advanced posts of the German defense. The fortifications at the very mouth of the Ssimba-Uranga swept away the light cruisers Hyacinth and Pioneer.

At 06:30 the monitors dropped anchor about 55 cables from the Koenigsberg and opened fire.

The position chosen for the monitors was, as Captain 2nd Rank Loof had expected, below an island four miles upstream of the mouth. For about ten minutes, the monitors fired, corrected by the Farman circling over the jungle. There was a continuous rumble of volleys, the "soft rustle" of shells, then explosions in the jungle, the rise of geysers of dirty water as the gunners of the monitors tried to fork the Koenigsberg.

Having received reports from observation posts about the position of the monitors, Captain 2nd Rank Loof ordered return fire from all six starboard guns.

Captain 1st Rank Eric Fullerton, who was on the Severn, was stunned by the accuracy of the Koenigsberg's fire. Shells fell into the water just a few meters from the side of his flagship monitor, raising fountains of water and throwing tons of stunned fish and dozens of unfortunate crocodiles to the surface.

By some miracle, the Germans could not achieve direct hits for a long time. The British could not get hit either.

Only at 07:40 a shell from the Koenigsberg hit the nose 152-mm gun of the Mereya monitor, putting it out of action, killing three and wounding four gunners. A few minutes later, another shell hit the Mersey in the waterline area. The forward hold of the monitor began to fill with water. The Mereya reversed five cables downstream.

The next volley of "Kenigsberg" fell directly on the former place of its parking. "Severn" continued to fight alone. From it they noticed the place from where the German observers corrected the fire of the Koenigsberg.

With several volleys, the monitor knocked down these trees, after which the accuracy of the Koenigsberg's fire decreased markedly. Apparently, either the post was destroyed, or the spotter was killed.

The first British shell hit the Koenigsberg only at about 8 o'clock in the morning, exploding in the bow of the cruiser. The damage he inflicted was insignificant, but two sailors were killed.

This was the first combat loss suffered by the cruiser. By a fatal accident, both dead sailors (Helfferich and Appell) arrived on the Koenigsberg just a couple of weeks ago, having made a dangerous and adventurous journey on an open boat under sail from Mozambique.

The second shell exploded near the cruiser's command bridge, lightly wounding Captain 2nd Rank Loof in the hand, as well as the cruiser's navigator Lieutenant Commander Heinrichs and the signalman.

After the destruction of the correction platform in the thicket of mangroves by the fire of the Severn, the correction post on the top of Mount Pemba, at an altitude of 160 meters and at a distance of 4600 meters from the British monitors, entered into business. Shells fell around the Severn monitor, but it continued to fire, firing a total of 635 shells at the Königsberg and its firing points in the delta by noon.

The monitor crew worked in unbearable heat without a break for seven hours and already

did not have the strength to continue the fight. In addition, spotter planes, having used up fuel, were forced to return to the airfield of Mafia Island.

Giving after the departing "Severn" several volleys of the deadly "Aufvinderzeen", according to the British, the "Koenigsberg" ceased fire.

At 13:30, a spotter aircraft again appeared over the delta. The Mereya and the Severn again went up the river and anchored not far from their original moorings.

The artillery duel flared up again, although, in fact, there were no results. "Koenigsberg" did not stop firing, but fired with less accuracy and from a smaller number of guns.

At 15:45 both monitors went downstream. The crews were finally exhausted, many were wounded by shrapnel, but, most importantly, everyone lost heart, seeing that the battle did not bring any results. The English ships withdrew to Tiren Bay, but the exhausted crews did not have to rest. Without wasting a minute, preparations were made to continue the operation.

Shooting at high elevation angles greatly loosened the monitor cases. It was necessary to install temporary additional mounts, repair the gun and holes on the Mercey, and start working out the interaction between monitors and spotter aircraft again. In the exercises, the adjustment was excellent, but in battle it gave very mediocre results.

Of the 635 shots fired by the monitors, only 78 were corrected from the aircraft. There were only six hits.

In reality, in the battle on July 6, the Koenigsberg received nine hits with 152-mm shells and four hits with 120-mm shells. Four people were killed, ten were seriously injured. Many received minor injuries.

The cruiser fired about 400 shells at the enemy, damaging the Mereya monitor, on which four people were killed and four seriously wounded (two of them later died). "Koenigsberg" received a number of damages, which, however, did not affect its combat capability.

## XI

July 11 "Severn" and "Mersey" again entered the delta. At the entrance, they were met with the same warm welcome as on July 6. The monitors immediately received several hits from 47-mm shells from the forward lines of the German defenses, whose emplacements Admiral King Hall considered suppressed. The monitor "Mereei", approaching his old place, gave up anchor and - in order to divert the attention of the enemy to himself - opened fire, while the "Severn" continued to rise up the river.

Admiral King Hall convinced Captain 1st Rank Fullerton to get as close as possible to the Koenigsberg. "Koenigsberg", having fired only one salvo at the "Mersey", transferred fire to the "Severn", which was bombarded with shells, but did not respond.

Having by some miracle not received a single hit, the Severn at 12:30 anchored a few hundred meters closer to the German cruiser and opened fire. The pilot of the spotter aircraft, Senior Lieutenant Jay Kill, hovered over

"Koenigsberg", in order to more accurately mark the places where the shells fell.

"Four hundred yards! - was the first report of the pilot. - Two hundred! One hundred!"

According to the recollections of the Severn officers, the results of the shooting had an "terribly exciting" effect on them. Soon, eight of the twelve shells fired at the Koenigsberg hit the cruiser. Columns of smoke rose over the wounded Koenigsberg.

The cruiser fired back with just three guns. One of the British shells knocked down the middle tube of the Koenigsberg, which crashed and crashed onto the deck. Shell after shell began to tear the deck and the superstructure of the cruiser.

Behind the thunder of shots and the whistle of steam coming out, the cries of the wounded and dying were not heard. Streams of blood ran across the deck. Captain 2nd rank Loof continued to lead the battle, remaining on deck. A shell fragment hit his silver cigarette case, which was in the side pocket of his tunic, which saved the Koenigsberg commander from serious injury, and possibly death.

Projectile hits from the monitors followed one after another. But the spotter from Mount Pemba reported to Loof about the hits of German shells on the British monitors, and the Koenigsberg continued to fight, although now only three guns could fire.

Around 13:00, a British 152 mm shell exploded between the bridge and the forward gun, putting the gun out of action and killing and injuring everyone on the bridge. Captain 2nd rank Loof, who, however, continued to command the ship, was also seriously wounded. The monitors did not stop firing.

A strong fire raged at the stern of the Koenigsberg, threatening with an explosion of ammunition.

"Weymouth" and the Australian cruiser "Pioneer" from the maximum angle of elevation of the guns also fired at the "Koenigsberg" and at the surrounding heights, where correction posts and field batteries were deployed.

In the midst of the battle, the only anti-aircraft gun of the Koenigsberg shot down Lieutenant Kill's spotter. Kill managed to transmit to the monitor: "We are shot down. Send a boat to pick us up."

From the bridge of the Severn, they saw how the spotter plane, like a padded duck, somersaulting, crashed into the water, raising a cloud of spray and disintegrating into pieces of split plywood, patches of skin and scraps of twisted wires.

The boats from both monitors rushed to the crash site, about 200 yards from the ships. The first boat from the Mersey to reach the crash site found Lieutenant Kill and his lookout holding onto the half-submerged remains of the fuselage and waving their arms to attract the attention of rescuers.

When the plane crashed, the observer did not stop adjusting the fire for a second. When the downed plane fell into the water, only one gun continued to operate on the Koenigsberg.

At that moment, Captain 2nd Rank Loof realized that the carnage that the battle with the monitors had become must be interrupted. And he ordered the crew to leave the ship, at the same time instructing his senior officer, Lieutenant Commander Koch, to prepare the Koenigsberg for flooding. Locks were removed from all guns and thrown overboard.

By this time, "Koenigsberg" was a flaming ruin.

The removal of people went quickly and in an organized manner. Lifeboats transported everyone to the shore, which was about 50 meters away.

The seriously wounded Captain 2nd Rank Loof was brought ashore on the last boat. Lieutenant Commander Koch and Sergeant Miner Hegeli remained on the flaming ship, which was still under fire from the British. They placed a blasting bomb under the heads of two torpedoes, lit a fuse and swam to the shore.

Captain 2nd Rank Loof watched the sinking of his ship from the shore.

"There was a dull sound, barely distinguishable among the roar of exploding English shells," Max Loof later recalled. — It was the explosion of our torpedoes. Jerking, as if in a deadly convulsion, the Koenigsberg tipped to starboard and slowly sank into the silt of the river along the upper deck. The stern part completely went under water, the bow part protruded above the surface. The river water put out the fires that blazed on the ship.

If Loof seemed to the explosion "deaf" and "barely distinguishable" against the background of the explosions of British shells, then to the British it seemed deafening.

"The explosion shook the jungle within a radius of several miles," recalls Captain 1st Rank Fullerton, who watched the whole picture from the bridge of the Severn monitor. "A cloud of bubbling black smoke rose high above the broken masts and superstructures of the Königsberg and the mangroves of the jungle."

"Target destroyed," the artillery observers reported dispassionately.

Clouds of black smoke rising over the Koenigsberg were greeted by the loud cries of the military department on both monitors. The Severn, before approaching the enemy, continued to fire for about an hour without weighing anchor.

Around 13:40, seven new explosions were noted, and Captain 1st Rank Fullerton ordered the Mercey to weigh anchor and move forward above the island. As soon as the second plane arrived, the Mercey opened fire, firing 28 volleys.

By 14:20, the Koenigsberg was a pile of flaming debris, and the admiral raised the signal to the monitors to "return".

When the monitors descended to the mouth of the Rufiji, the crews of the blockade cruisers, lined up on the decks, greeted them with shouts of "Hurrah!" Flags were hoisted on all ships announcing victory.

The last German cruiser deployed in the ocean on the eve of the war was destroyed. "For eight months he successfully resisted all our attempts to destroy him and fought hard to the end," notes the official British history.

## EPILOGUE

The English ships left the Rufiji Delta, and the next day, July 12, 1915, Captain 2nd Rank Loof returned to his half-sunk ship with the rest of the crew.

First of all, it was necessary to bury the dead. Of the 213 people who were in the last battle on board the Koenigsberg, 32 were killed and 128 were wounded.



From the "undefeated", according to Loof, "Koenigsberg", first of all, they began to remove 105-mm guns. The thrown overboard locks were raised to the surface and, according to the developed methodology of "native transport", were sent to Dar es Salaam for repairs. There, the cruiser's guns were put in order. Five of them made up a new coastal battery in Dar es Salaam, two guns were installed in Tanga, two were sent to Lake Tanganyika, and one to Lake Victoria. These guns greatly strengthened the artillery power of the militia army of Colonel Funen Lettov, who continued to fight with the British.

Max Loof, who was soon promoted to captain of the 1st rank, having recovered from his wounds, took command of the German lake flotilla on Tanganyika. Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck, who soon became a general, actually continued to hold the entire territory of German East Africa, except for the small island of Mafia captured by the British.

Lake Tanganyika was also completely in the hands of the Germans, where German armed steamships under the command of Max Loof freely ruled.

The faithful combat satellites of the Koenigsberg, the steamboats-boats Adjutant and Vami, were also transferred to the lake. Loof had several other wooden steamships at his disposal, which he managed to arm.

The huge Lake Tanganyika (or Tanganyika, as it appears in some reference books) was discovered in 1858 by English travelers Burton and Speke. The area of the lake is 34 thousand square kilometers. The waters of the lake wash the shores of Tanzania, Congo, Zambia and Burundi. The depth of Tanganyika, second only to Baikal, reaches 1435 meters. The average depth of the tectonic depression where the lake was formed is 700-800 meters.

During the First World War, one shore of the lake was held by the Germans, the other by the British. It soon became clear to the British that if they succeeded in wresting dominance over the lake from the Germans, then operations to seize the territory of German East Africa would be greatly simplified. To do this, it was necessary, first of all, to destroy the German lake flotilla.

The British began to urgently form their own flotilla, which later received the name of the "Tanganyika squadron".

In the second half of 1915, two motor boats 12 m long and 2.5 m wide, armed with a 47-mm gun and a machine gun, were delivered to Cape Town. From Cape Town, they traveled 2,500 miles on railway platforms to the city of Fungurum in the Belgian Congo. Further, their journey continued on steam locomobiles to the town of Sankisia (140 miles), from where the boats were again taken by rail to the Lualaba River.

The boats climbed 400 miles up the river, after which they "traveled" the last 180 miles on the railroad, which led to the small Belgian harbor of Albertville on the west coast of Tanganyika. The harbor was protected by Belgian batteries.

German bases and troops were located on the eastern shore of the lake. The personnel of the flotilla consisted of three officers, a naval doctor - a specialist in tropical diseases and 28 volunteer sailors.

On December 23, 1915, both boats, which received the exotic names "Mi-mi" and "Toy-Toy", were launched into the water of Lake Tanganyika. High-speed, capable of giving speeds up to 15 knots and maneuverable British boats, boldly attacking German armed ships, destroyed them one by one, forcing Loof with the remnants of the flotilla to take refuge in the bases of the eastern coast.

When, in the second half of 1917, the British Expeditionary Forces under the command of General Smuts launched a decisive offensive into the territory of German East Africa, forcing General von Lettow with the remnants of his army to leave for the territory of Mozambique, Captain 1st Rank Loof was captured by the British, where he remained until February 1919 of the year.

In March 1919, Max Loof and 32 surviving sailors from the crew of the Koenigsberg returned to their homeland. Speaking at the Iron Cross award ceremony for his sailors, Loof said: "We did our best. For a year we diverted all available British forces in the eastern Indian Ocean. This could not be done by any other cruiser that participated in this war.

In September 1919, Captain 1st Rank Loof was appointed commandant of Kiel and held this post until March 1920.

From October 1920 to March 1922, Loof served as chief inspector of mine and torpedo weapons in the Reichsmarine (Navy of the Weimar Republic). In this position, on January 1, 1921, the former commander of the Koenigsberg was promoted to Rear Admiral. On March 31, 1922, Rear Admiral Loof retired with promotion to vice admiral.

Loof died on September 20, 1954 in Berlin at the age of 80. Like any officer who commanded cruiser-raiders during the war years, Max Loof left behind many legends. As always, these were legends about countless treasures buried somewhere on nameless atolls lost in the ocean. Although the lists of equipment and material assets handed over by Captain 1st Rank Loof to General von Lettow-Vorbeck included everything down to 20 kg of pepper from the galley, there was not a pfennig of cash. The cash register of the cruiser disappeared somewhere.

But the raiders deployed by the German command in the world's oceans even before the start of the war were supplied with very large amounts of money, moreover, in gold and silver coins. It was a kind of weapon, no less formidable than artillery pieces.

If the cruiser had to go somewhere to settle down, get information or replenish water and food supplies, then money should have become the best guarantee of mutual understanding and subsequent silence of the local native authorities. In addition, Loof removed the cash register and a bunch of postal orders from the English steamer City of Winchester. However, in the transfer sheets addressed to General von Lettow-Vorbeck after the death of the Koenigsberg, no cash was mentioned at all.

The English writer William Travis, who tried to investigate this dark story in his book Treasures of the Seychelles, claims that Loof, realizing that his song was somehow sung when he ran out of coal in September 1914, stashed cash on the tiny island of Assumption, which is 20 miles from Aldabra Atoll. As proof, Travis cites the following case. (See I.V. Mozheiko, "In the Indian Ocean".)

In 1949, an elderly couple from Germany, Mr. and Mrs. Umfeld, appeared in the city of Mahe on Aldabra. The purpose of their visit to the archipelago was unusual. They wanted to hire a small ship in order to make a trip to the uninhabited island of Assumption.

The conditions set by the guests from Germany alerted the local shipowners. The owner of the ship was not supposed to accompany the Umfelds on their trip to the islet, and none of the crew had the right to go ashore while a married couple from Germany was on it.

None of the shipowners agreed to such conditions, which led the Umfeld spouses to despair. They assured that they knew these places very well, that Mr. Umfeld himself had once served in the Navy and he even had a secret map of these waters and the island itself, issued by the German Admiralty back in Kaiser times. Umfeld showed this map to everyone, and it turned out to be much more detailed than all modern maps of the Assumption Island. In a last attempt to carry out their plan, the Umfelds turned to a wealthy Austrian who, having retired, lived in his own villa in the vicinity of the city of Mahe.

When the Austrian asked the spouses why they were so interested in the island forgotten by God and people, Mr. Umfeld admitted that he wanted to arrange something like a sanatorium there for retired German naval officers.

The explanation was completely absurd, if only because Umfeld, having such a detailed map of the island, could not help but know that it had neither fresh water nor vegetation, while in the same Indian Ocean there were many atolls that were much more convenient and pleasant for settlements. As a result, according to William Travis, the Umfelds could not convince the Austrian to provide them with assistance on the terms put forward by them and a few days later they left Mahe.

Whether they finally managed to get to the island of Assumption is unknown. Travis assures that, having learned about this visit, he made an inquiry to the German naval archive whether there was a man named Umfeld among the officers of the Koenigsberg. The answer received by Travis from the archive allegedly stated that part of the archive was destroyed during the bombing of Hamburg by Allied aircraft during the Second World War and it is not possible to establish whether there was a gentleman named Umfeld among the officers of the Königsberg cruiser possible.

This is more than strange, since the list of Koenigsberg officers was published in the German periodical press and in special literature on the cruising operations of the First World War.

Even the author of these lines, who lived almost his entire adult life behind the Iron Curtain, has this list at his disposal. (See Appendix "B"). And it can be said with certainty that there was no officer with the surname Umfeld on the Koenigsberg. Erich-Otto Umfeld is the son-in-law of the commander of the Koenigsberg, who sailed before the start of World War II as a navigator of the German merchant fleet.

As for Max Loof himself, it is known that in 1925, with a group of sailors who had previously served on the Koenigsberg, he, as they say, made a trip "to places of combat glory."

A group of veterans got on an English mail liner to Madagascar. There, having received permission from the British authorities, retired Vice Admiral Max Loof and his former subordinates reached the memorable island of Mafia, from where regular (once every two weeks) flights were made to the Rufiji Delta. However, the routes of these flights passed far enough from the remains of the Koenigsberg.

Then the unwavering veterans hired a ship. It was a wheeled steamer called the Solar Pygmy, taken off the regular line especially for this purpose.

All this was not at all cheap, but the former Koenigsbergers were ready to go to any expense, just to once again see the charred, ruined and plundered remains of their famous ship. As proof of this, they paid the shipowner for the losses incurred and paid for the weekly charter of the Solar Pygmy.

The steamboat was loaded with food and beer, and the veterans of the cruiser were accompanied by a four-piece band hired on Mafia Island. On August 18, 1925, the Solar Pygmy left Tirenskaya Bay and entered the Ssimba-Uranga branch.

The Koenigsberg stood in a semi-submerged state with a roll to starboard, as if moving away from the coast, just as the sailors of its crew saw it last time, leaving forever in the jungles of East Africa.

Veterans unfurled the old Kaiser naval flag, the orchestra played a couple of half-forgotten marches (according to brought notes), beer mugs converged in memory of the dead; and this is all that is known about the Solar Pygmy expedition.

The steamboat stayed at the site of the old Koenigsberg parking lot for a whole week.

What Vice Admiral Loof and his subordinates were doing this week remained unknown. It is known that they did not climb the remains of the Koenigsberg, but they visited some islands of the delta, where traces of former gun positions and machine-gun nests were still preserved, human bones, pierced pith helmets, scraps of windings and other debris left by periods of human madness, were lying around. called wars.

It seems to me incredible that Max Loof could have appropriated the cash desk of the Königsberg, and equally the cash desk of the captured steamship City of Winchester. If this were so, then immediately upon arrival at home, he would not have been promoted to rear admiral, but demoted to the rank and file and sent to jail.

Then what did he do for a whole week in the Rufiji delta ten years after the last battle of the Koenigsberg and why did he send his son-in-law to the island of Assumption in 1949?

In addition to big secrets, the outgoing 20th century left millions of small ones. And if big mysteries still have some chances to be unraveled, then small mysteries flow into history for eternal oblivion. \* \* \*

The Koenigsberg stood on the muddy bottom of the Rufiji Delta until 1960, when the government of Tanzania, having received the necessary materials from Germany, began to dismantle the ship. The work was completed in 1963. The stern metal plate with the inscription "Königsberg" was sent to Germany and mounted in the stele of the monument in Laboe.

Operational and tactical data of the light cruiser "Koenigsberg"

Displacement: 3390 tons (standard), 3814 tons (full).

Main dimensions: 114.8 x 13.2 x 3.2 m.

Maximum speed; 23 knots (two-shaft power plant, triple expansion steam engine, 11 naval-type boilers, 12,000 hp, 820 tons of coal).

Armament: ten 105 mm guns, eight 52 mm guns, two 450 mm torpedo tubes.

Reservation: shields on guns - 50 mm, deck - 20-30 mm, conning tower - 100 mm.

Cruising range: 5750 miles at a speed of 12 knots.

Crew: 14 officers and 308 sailors.

List of officers of the light cruiser Koenigsberg who served on it from July 1914 to July

1915.

Commander: Captain 2nd Rank Loof.

Senior officer: Lieutenant Commander Koch (Georg).

Senior navigation officer: Lieutenant Commander Heinrich.

Senior artilleryman: senior lieutenant Apel.

Artillery officers: Senior Lieutenant Angel,

senior lieutenant Riemener (deceased),

Senior Lieutenant Freund (deceased)

Lieutenant Kots,

Lieutenant Shlame,

Lieutenant Venig.

Senior Mechanical Engineer: Captain 3rd Rank Schilling (Gustav).

Engineer: Lieutenant Commander Wodman.

Ship's doctor: Dr. Gnerich.

Auditor: Lieutenant Christiansen.

Prize Team: Senior Lieutenant of the Germ Reserve,

Reserve Lieutenant Yeager (Deceased)

lieutenant of the reserve Shprozhof,

senior physician Frenkel,

healer Zayt

## TREASURES OF CAPTAIN NERGER

### OCEAN LONE WOLF RID

Captain second rank Karl-August Nerger was born in 1875 in Rostock. Seaside towns in themselves are the main incentive for young people to try their hand at serving in the military or merchant fleet. All the fleets of the world draw their cadres chiefly from the young men of the port cities. Any boy whose childhood was spent under the whistles of steamboats and the screech of howlers of warships, the clang of tower cranes and the roar of riveting hammers because of the high forests of slipways, aspires to the fleet, considering the naval service the only worthy of a real man.

Karl-August Nerger was no exception. In 1893, he entered the naval school in Kiel, and in 1897, already a ship's midshipman, he was assigned to the Itis gunboat, serving in the Far Eastern waters. Nerger was there

promoted to officer, and in 1900 - already a lieutenant, navigator of the *Itis* - took part in the suppression of the Boxer uprising ...

The outbreak of the First World War found Nерger a captain of the third rank in the position of commander of the light cruiser *Stettin*, on board of which he received his baptism of fire, taking part in the unsuccessful battle for the German fleet in Helgoland Bay on August 28, 1914, when German light cruisers had to fight battleships. British cruisers. In the future, captain of the third rank Nерger, continuing to command the *Stettin*, escorted submarines leaving for patrol, fought in the Baltic with the ships of the Russian fleet, fired at Libau and Revel, miraculously avoiding Russian mines and pitfalls ...

In February 1916, Nерger was promoted to captain of the second rank. He was called to Berlin, where he was offered to take command of the auxiliary cruiser *Wolf*, break through the British blockade into the open sea and start a merciless war against British shipping in the vast oceans.

All this looked very romantic on the eve of the war and in the first months of hostilities, when the entire German and world press excitedly talked about the invincible ocean squadron of Admiral von Spee, who defeated the British at the distant Cape Coronel; about the elusive and daring raiders "*Emden*", "*Karlsruhe*" and "*Koenigsberg*", drowning and capturing almost daily English ships with the most valuable military cargo.

But now it was not the autumn of 1914, but the spring of 1916. The legendary squadron of Admiral Spee had long been completely destroyed, and the few survivors who served on its ships languished in English captivity. On the reefs of the Cocos Islands, the remains of the once legendary *Emden* rested, and its valiant crew, along with the commander, were scattered around the prisoner of war camps. The ocean swallowed the *Karlsruhe*, turning it into a ghost ship, and the pipes and masts of the blown-up *Koenigsberg* protruded from the muddy waters of the African Rufiji River.

Pirate romance is over. It took the British only half a year to clear the Ocean from the German corsairs of the first war. It took them almost as much to drive the entire German High Seas Fleet into its bases, from where it had not dared to appear since the Battle of Dogger Bank in January 1915.

The noose of the British naval blockade choked Germany, and the German fleet, paralyzed with fear, made practically no attempts to throw this noose from their country ...

The situation changed by the beginning of 1916, when the able and aggressive Admiral Reinhard Scheer became commander of the German High Seas Fleet, a strong supporter of the active actions of the ships entrusted to him. Among the first actions of the new commander was an order to resume "corsair" operations in the ocean against British shipping.

"Madness" - such was the conclusion of staff specialists. It is simply impossible to allocate a single cruiser from the High Seas Fleet and formations fighting in the Baltic for this purpose in the current operational situation. But even if it were possible, we must remember that it is no longer August 1914.

The British have long since put things in order in their rear: dozens of their cruisers cover all the main lines of sea communications, turning the operations of surface raiders into simple suicide.

Scheer did not agree with such conclusions of the operatives of his headquarters. Of course, on the scale with which this business was planned before the war, and even with the way it was carried out

in the first months of the war, the actions of surface raiders can no longer be organized. But to say that such operations are generally impossible is also impossible.

The commander agreed that the actions of battle cruisers are now unfeasible for a number of the most compelling reasons: there are few of them, their actions in the ocean cannot be ensured, not to mention the fact that now, in 1916, when a plan is being developed for a decisive battle with the Grand Fleet, to spend cruisers of the first line in such operations, to put it mildly, is unreasonable. But in a raider war, it is quite possible to use auxiliary cruisers - armed merchant ships that are not as visible as warships, have good autonomy and sufficient speed. And their loss will not be as painfully perceived as the loss of a specially built cruiser.

In addition, the commander considered, now is a very favorable moment. The British have almost forgotten about the surface raiders, and there is a chance to catch them by surprise again in the ocean.

On the very eve of 1916, two auxiliary cruisers were sent to the ocean raid: "Meve" and "Wolf". The latter was converted into an auxiliary cruiser from the former British bulk carrier Belgravia, but she was immediately out of luck. Not having time to go to sea, the Wolf ran aground at the mouth of the Elbe and received such serious damage that its combat use was out of the question.

Meanwhile, the Meve, which had gone into the ocean, returned safely to Germany on March 4, 1916 with very impressive achievements. He managed to destroy fifteen enemy merchant ships with a total displacement of 57,520 gross register tons, and on one of the mines set by the raider, the British battleship King Edward VII blew up and sank.

"Meve" began to prepare for the second raid, hoping for even greater success. In addition, his success prompted Scheer to allocate another merchant ship for conversion into an auxiliary cruiser. It turned out to be the German dry cargo ship Wachtfels with a displacement of 5809 tons, built in 1913. The vessel had a length of 135 meters, a triple expansion steam engine and a speed of 10.5 knots.

Having discarded all prejudices, it was renamed "Wolf", although experienced sailors, mindful of the previous "Wolf", who sat on the stones, shook their heads meaningfully. However, the captain of the second rank, Nerger, who was appointed to command this second Wolf, was not superstitious, and even, after several months of perestroika work, he scheduled a trip to the sea for Friday, November 22, 1916. During this time, five 150-mm guns and four 500-mm torpedo tubes were installed on the Wolf. The ship took on board 465 mines and, most importantly, a seaplane, which Nerger achieved with great difficulty. It was even more difficult to find an experienced pilot who could take off and land on an ocean wave. No one had such experience, since the Wolf was the first German ship to go on an ocean raid with an aircraft on board. This hydroplane was immediately dubbed "Wolfchen" ("Teen Wolf").

I

As already mentioned, the captain of the second rank Nerger was above all prejudices and superstitions and scheduled the departure of the auxiliary cruiser Wolf for Friday, November 22. However, each of the three hundred and fifty-four people who made up the crew of the new auxiliary cruiser was very dejected by this circumstance, considering Friday

the exit is a bad omen, especially mindful of the fate of the previous Wolf. Nerger had to quickly convince himself that his superstitious subordinates were right, and not he.

No sooner had the Wolf gone beyond the line of German patrols than a fire broke out in one of its coal bunkers. It was not possible to take the fire under control, it spread to another bunker and began to threaten a real disaster. Nerger considered it good to return back to base. One compartment had to be flooded, but the fire continued and it was not possible to localize it.

In the port, the fire was quickly extinguished, coal was reloaded, and on November 30 they again put to sea.

The weather favored the exit - a thick fog hung over the sea, visibility did not exceed thirty meters. The gray shadows of the ships the Wolf was passing by were quickly fading into a milky haze.

The fog was so thick that Nerger, remembering the sad fate of the previous Wolf, was forced to anchor without tempting his own fate. He became superstitious. By noon the weather cleared up a little, and Nerger ordered to weigh anchor. However, about half an hour later, the fog thickened again to such an extent that Nerger did not dare to pass through the line of protective minefields under such conditions. I had to backtrack again.

"God loves a trinity," Nerger decided, and as soon as the fog began to rise a little, he again ordered to start moving. "Wolf" at low speed, stopping from time to time, moved towards the exit to the open sea, which was done only in the evening.

They passed at a short distance past the German patrol ships of the advanced patrol and left them astern, without even exchanging the traditional wishes for a happy voyage. The sentinels, of course, were notified of the exit, but they only knew that a German ship would pass by them. What kind of ship and where it was going, the Marines had no idea: Much, if not all, depended on the secrecy of the operation.

For some time, the patrol ships could be seen behind the stern of the Wolf, and then melted over the horizon. And "Wolf" was left alone.

The path of the auxiliary cruiser lay across the North Sea. The weather, as luck would have it, suddenly became calm and clear, and although no British blockade ships were visible, their communications were clearly received by the Wolf radio station. They were clearly somewhere nearby.

But so far all was going well, and the Wolf continued northward at full speed - not so small for a cargo ship of that time - just over ten knots.

Fortunately, the weather soon changed dramatically. A north-easterly squall came up, the course had to be reduced to seven knots. It was simply incomparable to plod along at such a speed in the zone of the enemy's most intense patrolling. In addition, the Wolf, which was overloaded with coal and various supplies necessary for a long autonomous raid, was overwhelmed by waves and swayed mercilessly, exhausting the crew with bouts of seasickness. And ahead lay the vast minefields put up by the British to secure the blockade. In such weather, even a weak minefield threatens with any surprises, and the low speed of the ship makes any meeting fatal, even with a weak enemy, since it gives the British enough time to concentrate their forces.

Nevertheless, Nerger believed in his luck so much that he did not doubt for a second the successful outcome of the breakthrough into the ocean. What difference does it make whether to go at a speed of seven knots or a full speed of only ten knots? Any warship will catch up and



destroy the Wolf without any effort. The Wolf can be considered dead even if English or neutral fishermen notice her and take care to report this to the command of the British patrol force guarding the exits from the North Sea. Therefore, all that remained to be done was to believe in luck, in a lucky star, in the love of capricious Fortune, and in everything else that determines the success of sea adventures for centuries.

A few hours later the weather improved. The wind died down, the sea calmed down, making it possible to follow a ten-knot course. But before they had time to take a breath on the Wolf, a new storm swept in, this time from the west.

I had to slow down again. This time it was even worse than the day before. Every second, thousands of tons of water fell with noise onto the deck of the Wolf. The waves, raising the stern, exposed the choking propeller of the machine. The ship was laid from side to side, everything went around in the cabins and cockpits. It was hard to breathe in the never-ending whirlwind of salt spray, and the ship groaned and groaned as if it was ready to fall apart. The impact of the wave washed overboard a life raft with an automatic flare. On the Wolf they did not notice this and were very surprised when the flame of a false flare flared up near them and disappeared, carried away by the wind astern. Then washed away the raft with ring lighting. And again, the flames broke out next to the side of the Wolf, which was completely inopportune, since Nerger wanted to pass through the minefields unnoticed. The lights glowed for about half an hour, treacherously indicating the place of the ship in the night. I had to once again hope for luck, since it was impossible to do anything.

And, as if all that wasn't enough, a snowstorm suddenly hit, and the air temperature dropped sharply. "Wolf" immediately turned into an ice mountain, which made it almost impossible for any movement on the deck. In addition, the guns were also iced up, and this made the auxiliary cruiser - in the event of a meeting with the enemy - virtually defenseless.

The gale-force wind blowing from the west gave way to a north-easterly wind of the same hurricane force. Nerger's calculations showed that the Wolf was off schedule by more than twenty hours.

From time to time, Nerger ordered the navigation and deck lights to be turned on in order to give the outside observer the impression of a meeting with a neutral steamer.

Finally managed to get through the English barriers, but the storm continued to rage. At times it seemed that she was weakening, but a minute later she again swooped in with a vengeance, as if trying to do everything possible not to release the Wolf into the ocean. Slowly, jerkily, burrowing into the waves, the "Wolf" stubbornly made its way forward.

When the storm subsided, many minor damages were repaired on the Wolf with their own means. Nerger was most worried that most of the dishes were smashed to smithereens. The commander of the "Wolf" expected to capture a large number of prisoners and was afraid that they would have nothing to feed them from. Subsequent events showed that Nerger was worried in vain. Something, but the dishes on the "Wolf" turned out to be in abundance ...

On December 10, 1916, the auxiliary cruiser Wolf broke into the open ocean, safely passing all patrols and minefields of the British. Once in the vastness of the Atlantic, Nerger, in order to save coal, ordered one of the three boilers to be deactivated. He knew well the main commandment of the ocean raider: to save on everything - on coal, water, food and other reserves that are so difficult to replenish on the high seas ...

All subsequent days Nerger led the ship to the south. There were no incidents. Sometimes steamboats appeared on the horizon, hurrying from America to Europe and back. Nerger tried to avoid them. Since subordinates knew nothing about the intentions and plans of their

commander, they looked at each other in surprise and even allowed themselves to shake their heads disapprovingly. They did not understand why Nerger shied away from those ships that he was supposed to sink and capture. Nerger did not want to raise a commotion ahead of time, especially in the area where there were a lot of English warships.

Bad weather continued to chase the Wolf from the North Sea across the North Atlantic. If at the beginning of the trip tension reigned on the bridge, now it has resulted in what Nerger defined as a state of contemplation - something between tension and boredom. No one was afraid of meeting the enemy - the Wolf was armed no worse than any light cruiser. The trouble was that in case of damage, there was nowhere to go for repairs, and therefore it was necessary to exercise extreme caution.

In the "Horse Latitudes" "Wolf" unexpectedly stumbled upon a half-flooded charred hull of a sailboat. There were no masts, and only a fragment of a jib hung over the surviving bowsprit. On the stern was the name "Esbern Snar". Nerger went around the sailboat from all sides, but because of the strong wave, he did not land his people on it. One of the officers offered to finish off the sailboat with artillery, but Nerger refused.

"The British Prime Minister assured," the Wolf commander remarked, "that this war would last twenty years. Therefore, you need to save ammunition. He really felt sorry for wasting shells on this wreckage.

On Christmas Eve, a holiday was organized on board, which lacked only a Christmas tree and traditional gifts. Of course, this could have been taken care of in advance, but with all the things on the eve of the departure, Nerger's Christmas gifts simply flew out of his head, and everyone else simply did not know anything about where and how long their ship was going to go and therefore did not worry about anything. However, since no one was counting on gifts, there were no dissatisfied people.

All personal affairs and desires faded into the background. The only desire was the success of the operation. But, nevertheless, a festive atmosphere reigned on board. Several Christmas trees were made from pieces of wood, which, being painted green, looked quite decent. There were plenty of candles, as well as small electric bulbs that went to the garlands. In addition, a festive newspaper was issued, which significantly dispelled the dreary monotony of ship life.

In the officer's wardroom, the Christmas holiday was somewhat overshadowed - the "tree" caught fire, which, by all accounts, looked amazing. However, this incident was quickly forgotten and had a lot of fun. The only thing missing was snow, since the Wolf had already descended into tropical latitudes, where the temperature was plus thirty degrees.

On the German light and auxiliary cruisers, the pastor was not supposed to be in the state. His duties, if necessary, were performed by the commander of the ship.

Therefore, Nerger organized a short service and addressed the crew with a "Christmas sermon", where he spoke more about Germany fighting in the ring of fronts than on the merits.

In the midst of the celebrations, the holiday had to be temporarily interrupted, as some ship was discovered on the horizon. It was known from radio interception that several British cruisers based on the Cape Verde Islands were patrolling in this area. I had to be alert.

Meanwhile, the Wolf was already approaching the equator, and Nerger could not ignore this event without the traditional celebration of Neptune. By the way, he himself had previously approached the equator several times, but did not cross it and had to undergo a "baptism" along with many others.

"Neophytes". While still a junior officer, Nerger was "baptized" while crossing the tropic.

But the equator is the equator! Neptune doesn't like jokes. It was necessary to prepare for a new holiday.

First of all, it was necessary to make a list of all the "neophytes" who crossed the equator for the first time. Many of them had no desire for "baptism" at all and tried to evade it under any pretext. But no amount of subterfuge helped. Anyone who claimed to have already crossed the equator had either to present witnesses or a "Diploma" issued by Neptune and certified by the captain of the ship on which he crossed the equator. If, contrary to assurances, the sailor could not present either witnesses or "evidence", then he was entitled to a particularly strict procedure for "baptism".

According to tradition, Triton was the first to appear on board the Wolf on the eve of the equatorial crossing as Neptune's messenger. witness the festive baptism of all members of the crew crossing the equator for the first time. His Majesty expects to be received with all the honors befitting his high position.

The captain of the second rank Nerger handed Triton a list of "neophytes", headed by himself, and assured that Neptune's visit was an honor for his ship, and he, the commander, would make every effort to make Neptune's stay on board the Wolf as pleasant as possible. Newt was then handed a couple of bottles of beer and a pack of cigarettes, and he left with his entourage.

The next day, waiting for Neptune, excitement reigned on the auxiliary cruiser. The sea was calm, the sun shone brightly in the bottomless blue tropical sky.

And then Neptune appeared arm in arm with his queen wife, accompanied by a large retinue. The captain of the second rank Nerger noticed that the God of the Seas is very similar to his messenger yesterday. True, now Neptune was adorned with a long beard, giving the lord of the ocean a very respectable look, and the curls of his wife, made, like Neptune's beard, from bast, hung down to the very deck. The royal couple was accompanied mainly by sea devils, smeared with soot and fat, shining in the sun.

Near Neptune bustled his court jester in a tailcoat and a top hat with frog arms and legs. The barber of the court, waving a huge wooden razor, and the herald, announcing in a loud voice the will of the God of the Seas, were also striking.

Neptune and his retinue, accompanied by Nerger, walked along the formation of the crew, and then the God of the Seas climbed onto the ladder built at the cargo hatch and announced that it was possible to proceed to the rite of baptism.

Nerger himself was the first to go through the rite of baptism. Everything, as he later recalled, went off relatively well. He was handed huge binoculars made from two bottles of champagne. Neptune "ordered" the commander of the Wolf to look through these binoculars at sea and announce when he sees the equator. Nerger raised the bottles, from which water poured over him. Nerger was soaked from head to toe. But it was still a "sparing ritual" - especially for the commander. Others had it worse. Next to the cargo hold, a pool of one and a half meters deep was built from canvas, filled to the brim with water. In front of the pool, the "court barber" spread soapy suds, flavored with soot, machine oil and fuel oil. And at the other end of the pool, a wind cone was stretched. The neophyte smeared with black foam was thrown into the pool, where he was subjected to a "shave", and then forced to crawl through the cone. But as soon as the unfortunate climbed into the cone, both front and rear began to

water with fire hoses, and when he managed to stick his face out of the water to take a breath of air, it was again smeared with black shaving foam ...

After the completion of the baptism, the more pleasant part of the ritual began with the issuance of diplomas and commemorative badges made in the ship's workshop. The sea devils accompanying Neptune were gifted with food and cigarettes so that they had something to do at the bottom of the sea, without arranging storms and hurricanes from idleness.

Then Nerger made his closing speech, thanking Neptune for "christening" the crew, and the God of the Seas majestically departed with all his retinue.

## II

Without any incident, the auxiliary cruiser Wolf made it to South African waters.

It was January 16, 1917. The sea was calm, there was not a cloud in the sky, the weather was clear, visibility was almost thirty miles. In the evening, right on the course, the signalmen noticed smoke. Soon it was already possible to distinguish seven ships going in the wake of each other, among which a huge twin-tube liner stood out. Apparently, it was an English convoy transporting parts of the Australian Corps to Europe. "Wolf" was about to make a jump to the prey, but the signalmen in time noticed an English armored cruiser in front of the column, which Nerger did not plan to contact at all.

"Wolf" passed by the convoy, posing as an ordinary merchant ship. Nerger ordered a slight change in course to get away from such an unpleasant neighborhood. When the convoy finally disappeared beyond the northern horizon, Nerger breathed a sigh of relief. If they had opened fire on the convoy, they would certainly have been at the bottom by now. For a merchant ship, which in essence was the Wolf, to engage in battle with an armored cruiser would be outright suicide.

The Wolf was now on a busy sea route at the Cape of Good Hope and, following the Indian Ocean, avoiding oncoming haze, laid mines behind her. Since there were no German ships in the ocean for a long time, only an enemy ship, or, in the worst case, a neutral one, could stumble on the exposed mines. But, go and then figure out who set these mines. Moreover, almost all the so-called "neutrals" directly or indirectly worked for the British.

The activities of "Wolf" quickly bore fruit. Already on January 27, the radio operators of the auxiliary cruiser intercepted a radio message reporting the appearance of German submarines near Cape Town. At first, this message caused Nerger bewilderment: how could submarines appear at such a distance from their bases? Then everything became clear. The British ships began to be blown up by mines, and for some reason the headquarters decided that they had been attacked by submarines. Nerger never understood how the British, with their naval experience, confused mines with torpedoes. Later, it was even claimed that the second-largest English liner Aquitania, which had more than a thousand Australian soldiers on board, blew up and died on these mines. This was reported by prisoners who later got on board the Wolf. On the Wolf itself, of course, no one really knew anything.

True, another indirect confirmation of this was the request in the British Parliament to the First Lord of the Admiralty about the death of the Cunard line liner. First lord in his

He replied in his usual manner that he did not intend to discuss the matter now. True, the British quickly discarded the version of submarines, but began to suspect neutral ships of setting mines, detaining them in ports for weeks and conducting searches. At times, direct accusations were brought against neutral captains that it was they who put mines.

And on board the Wolf, on January 27, another holiday took place - the birthday of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Despite the fresh weather, the sailors in dress uniform were lined up on the quarterdeck, listened to the commander's solemn speech and shouted the traditional three-time "Hurrah!" in honor of the Emperor. The sailors were served a festive dinner.

Then came the dreary days. The main task was to maintain the ship in combat-ready condition. Exercises were constantly held, the officers additionally worked with the sailors, explaining to them the military situation in East Africa, talking about the geography of these places, about the features of the Indian Ocean. In their free time, when the weather allowed, the ship's orchestra played on deck. Of course, there was no full-time orchestra on the Wolf. Nерger organized it from amateur amateurs. However, gradually the musicians began to play like real professionals.

At times, the Wolf stalled, allowing mechanics to make minor repairs to the car. At that moment, entire flocks of albatrosses began to circle over the Wolf. The sailors set snares on the deck and caught several birds, which, however, were soon released. Many steamships, catching albatrosses, ringed them to find out how far these birds travel. At the Wolf, of course, they decided to refrain from such scientific research.

From the sky, "Wolf" was besieged by albatrosses, and a whole flock of sharks was spinning around him in the water. So there was no shortage of entertainment!

And one fine day, a signal sounded on the ship: "Man overboard!"

True, it was not about people, but about two ducks that escaped from the ship's galley, which could make a huge gap in the lunch menu. Luckily they were caught...

The Wolf was heading northeast, heading for Ceylon. On the way, Hurricane Maurital hit the ship. Nерger had hoped that this cup would pass the Wolf, but the hurricane, contrary to all observations made over the past century, suddenly changed course in such a way that the auxiliary cruiser was right in its center. It is good that the Wolf was no longer overloaded with mines and coal, which allowed him to demonstrate excellent seaworthiness. Huge shafts crashed against its stem, and the spray did not even reach the bridge. The hurricane passed as quickly as it appeared. The ocean became quiet and calm again, as if by magic.

In mid-February, the Wolf approached the area where the shipping lanes leading to Colombo converged. Following along the Ceylon coast, Nерger set up several more minefields. In the course of this operation, several very unpleasant moments had to be experienced. The nights were dark, which allowed Nерger to get close almost to the very shore, laying mines at the entrance to the port. Suddenly, two searchlights flashed on the shore, beginning to probe the darkness of the night with their rays. Numbly, everyone on the Wolf's bridge followed the beams of searchlights, realizing that in another second, they would be spotted. A moment later, a sheaf of light hit everyone on the Wolf's bridge in the face. The ship was lit so brightly that Nерger had no doubt that on the shore they would quickly understand who was in front of them. However, nothing happened. The blinding beam held the Wolf for what felt like an eternity to Nерger, then glided on. Once again in the dark, "Wolf" resumed setting min...

The very next day, the English steamer Worcestershire with a displacement of 6700 tons turned out to be a victim of this minefield. An English message, intercepted by the Wolf's radio operators, indicated that the ship had experienced an internal explosion in one of its cargo holds and had sunk about seven miles south of Colombo. Again, it did not occur to the British that the ship was blown up by a mine, since even the very possibility of the appearance of German minefields in the area was not foreseen. When it became obvious that mines were laid at Colombo, suspicions arose again that either neutral ships or coastal steamers belonging to the Hindus were engaged in this. There was a furious squabble, but no concrete measures were taken.

A few days later, a second steamer, the Perseus, with a displacement of 6,500 tons, blew up in the same place. As in the first case, his team was rescued and taken to Colombo. But, if the crew and passengers of the deceased "Worcester" were still allowed to contact anyone, then the people from the "Perssus" were forbidden any contacts outside the port in order to prevent the spread of information about the "accident" with their ship. From the intercepted radio messages on the Wolf, they learned that several more ships, including the large passenger liner Mongolia, were killed on the mines they set. Then the British began to search for mines, discovered a barrier, which they announced to the whole world, adding that the port of Colombo would be closed for the duration of the trawl ...

Thus, the task of "Wolf" in the Colombo region was completed, and Nerger and his sailors were already reaping the fruits of their activities. However, the Wolf commander understood that in the end the British would get to the bottom of the true reason for the appearance of mines in their deep rear. Therefore, Nerger decided, the farther the Wolf was from Colombo at that moment, the better for him. He turned the ship to the southeast, heading for the very center of the Indian Ocean, where he intended to wage a cruising war against enemy shipping. There were plenty of weapons on the Wolf, as already mentioned: seven 150-mm guns and four torpedo tubes, which, however, were so carefully camouflaged that from the outside the ship seemed like an ordinary harmless cargo steamer, peacefully following its own way.

On February 27, the Wolf was halfway between Aden and Colombo when, in the very first rays of dawn, a steamer was discovered on the horizon. Nerger already knew that neutral ships had ceased to use this route, because under any pretext they were constantly detained by the British. This means that the discovered ship could only belong to the enemy. The ship was about ten miles away. To Nerger, it seemed strange, because it was very reminiscent of the silhouette of the Wolf itself. Much worse was that this ship had the same speed as the Wolf. Nevertheless, thanks to the better preparation of the engine crew, the Wolf gradually caught up with the steamer, and at 08:00 a signal went up on the auxiliary cruiser: "Immediately stop. Wait for the boat." The Wolf continued to slowly approach its first victim. It was already clear to Nerger that the ship was not armed, and he approached it for almost a thousand meters, doing nothing more and waiting for some kind of response.

At first the ship ignored the signal and did not stop. A warning shot was fired from the bow gun from the Wolf. This turned out to be enough. The steamer stopped, hoisting the English merchant flag. A lot of people jumped out on the upper deck. Later, Nerger found out why the ship did not obey his first demand: the captain was taking a bath, and the first officer was confused and did not know what to do. Nerger was also surprised that the ship's crew immediately rushed to the lifeboats. The English sailors were told that the "Huns" mercilessly shoot merchant ships, not even giving time to launch life-saving equipment. So they tried to escape before it was too late.

Nerger sent a boat with a prize crew to the captured ship. Of course, the English captain took advantage of this time to destroy secret documents.

However, it didn't matter much. At the very first superficial inspection, it turned out that the Wolf, going to this steamer, was guided by the instinctive voice of blood, since the English ship turned out to be his brother, built in Bremen by order of the same Hansa shipping company. In the old days, the ship sailed under the German flag and had the beautiful name "Gutenfels". At the beginning of the war, the British captured the Gutenfels in Alexandria, converted it into a tanker and named it Tarritella, but the old name was clearly read on its stern. Everyone remembered that the real name of the "Wolf" was "Wachtfels", although it was painted over more carefully.

Tarritella-Gutenfels was carrying a large supply of liquid fuel for her Mediterranean fleet.

The captain of the second rank Nerger did not raise his hand to sink his brother "Wolf", so unexpectedly met in the vastness of the Indian Ocean. Nerger asked the commander of the prize team if it was possible to convert the captured steamer into a mine layer? He replied that the re-equipment is quite possible. So we decided to do so.

Only the captain and officers of the Tarritella were British. The rest of the team consisted of Chinese. China was a neutral country, and Nerger had no reason to keep the Chinese prisoners, but they all unanimously decided to stay on the ship. It was completely indifferent to them whether they worked for the Germans or the British, as long as they kept the job, which was the only source of their livelihood.

Nerger gave the captured steamer a new name - "Iltis" - g. the memory of the gunboat Iltis, on which he himself received a baptism of fire in 1900 during the assault on the Taku forts during the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China.

A prize crew of twenty-seven, led by Lieutenant Commander Brandeis, was assigned to the new Iltis ("the newest ship in the German Navy," as Nerger put it). They were mainly machinists, signalmen and radio operators. The sailors were armed with rifles and revolvers, and on the new Iltis they installed a 52-millimeter gun, which had previously been in one of the holds of the Wolf in anticipation of a similar event. Provisions were loaded onto the prize ship, and many boxes of pineapples destined for the British army in Thessaloniki were removed, the pineapples were sent to the wardroom and to the sailor's galley. The entire crew of the Wolf enjoyed them for several weeks.

Going side by side with the Iltis, Nerger ordered the Wolfchen, an airborne hydroplane, to be launched into the water in order to reconnoiter the situation in the immediate vicinity of the ship. There was no time for priorities then, but later it turned out that this flight of the "wolf cub" was the first flight of a seaplane in the tropics. Nothing suspicious was seen from the air, and the ships calmly continued to reload. Now the mines were being loaded.

By evening, all the work was completed, and "Iltis" moved away from the "Wolf", having the first combat mission: to set up a minefield in the Gulf of Aden. The English flag on the ship was replaced by the German one. The English captain Meadow and his officers were transferred to the Wolf. Captain Meadow told Nerger that only a few hours before the capture of Wolf by his ship, he met and exchanged signals with the English light cruiser Newcastle. The English captain frankly expressed to Nerger his conviction that the atrocities of the Wolf in the Indian Ocean would not last long. In less than two weeks, Meadow assured him, the Wolf would be intercepted and destroyed.

"We'll see," Nerger replied evasively.

On the contrary, the capture of the Tarritella whetted the appetite of the commander of the Wolf. The area seemed to Nerger "very fertile", and he decided to continue cruising here, waiting for new

victims.

We didn't have to wait long. Two days later, on March 1, 1917, the Jumna steamer was discovered sailing to Calcutta with a cargo of salt. As usual, the ship did not respond to the order to stop. Nerger went to cut him off, having a speed of about two knots more than that of the Jumna. Having approached the Englishman at two thousand meters, Nerger ordered the guns to be loaded.

At that moment, misfortune happened: when the lock of the stern gun was closed, a premature shot occurred, which caused an explosion of the charge when the lock was not tightly closed. The explosion swept away the aft spire, ripped open the deck and destroyed the rigging of the mainmast. At the same time, four "gunners were killed, twenty-four were injured, some very seriously. The fuel tank standing behind the gun flared up, flames rose up, the shells of the first shots in the fenders began to burst. The motor boat hanging on the hoists was riddled with shrapnel. However, panic The wounded were dragged aside, the fire was extinguished, the rest of the guns were loaded as expected, and a minute later one of them fired a warning shot at the Jumna, ordering it to stop.

All these events affected the Jumna crew so much that they became paralyzed with fear. The explosion aboard the Wolf was taken as a demonstration of some terrible new weapon.

A prize team was sent to the Jumna, the ship was declared captured, the German flag was raised, and then the Wolf approached the prize ship and began to reload coal from it to replenish its noticeably empty coal pits. In all the plans hatched by Nerger, coal occupied the very first place. It was not difficult to understand that if the coal reserves ran out and could not be replenished, then everything else would run out. "Wolf" will have to be flooded, and we ourselves will go somewhere on boats. An alternative could be to leave for some neutral port with internment until the end of the war ...

The reloading of coal from the Jumna continued for two days, after which the ship was blown up and sent to the bottom. The crew of the Jumna consisted of English officers, whose advanced age was conspicuous. The sailors, as usual, were a motley conglomeration of all the races inhabiting the shores of the Indian Ocean. Both those and others had to be transported to the Wolf.

The wounded during the explosion of the gun were operated on, bandaged and laid on the tank, pulling an awning over them so that they would not be tormented by the heat. At least it was easier to breathe on the tank than in the interior.

The dead were buried at sea according to all the rules of the naval ritual. They were very sorry, but war is war, and death gathers its victims everywhere: from the fields of Flanders to the deck of the Wolf in the Indian Ocean. Everyone understood this.

Soon, Wolf's radio operators intercepted a radio message ordering all British ships bound for Aden to stay at least two hundred meters deep. This could only mean one thing - someone had already blown up on the Ittis mines!

Much less pleasant was another intercepted radio message, in which the English cruisers were informed of the exact description of the Wolf: its length, color, shape of the tube and superstructures. There was even talk of an airborne plane!

Who told the British these details was unknown, but Nerger decided not to go to the agreed rendezvous with the Ittis, but turned south.



## III

The next to fall directly into the arms of the Wolf was the English steamer Wordsworth, sailing from Rangoon to London with a cargo of 7,000 tons of rice. The ship was built already during the war and, in essence, was a self-propelled barge - a typical military building without any internal comfort and equipment. Just to stay afloat. The crew of the Wordsworth, as usual, was motley and multinational. The British officers, apparently in order to somehow compensate for their wounded pride, constantly asked Nерger the most unpleasant questions. Say, what will he do if he runs into an English cruiser? Break us with thunder, the British assured, if one of our cruisers does not appear soon! The British believed that at the sight of an English cruiser, the Germans would immediately jump into lifeboats, and blow up their ship, and then, with a clear conscience, go as a prisoner to the British. No, the German officers objected to them, do not wait! If your cruiser appears, then we will fight until one of us goes to the bottom. And you, probably, will be very pleased to die under your own shells?

After such an explanation, the British became noticeably less talkative and, apparently, were no longer so eager for the appearance of their "liberator cruiser".

They kept the prisoners in an empty mine cellar, fed them on an equal basis with everyone else. Three times a day they were allowed to walk on the upper deck.

"Wolf" continued to leave to the southeast, wanting to bypass Australia from the south. Already on the approach to the fifth continent, Wolf's signalmen found a sailboat sailing under full sail to the east. At the sight of the Wolf, the sailing ship raised the English flag and gave an identification signal. "Wolf" approached the sailboat at six hundred meters and gave the order to drift, raising the German flag. At the sight of the German flag on the sailboat, a commotion began. A boat with a prize crew that came from the Wolf found the crew of the sailboat, consisting mainly of blacks and mestizos, preparing for death. However, all the preparation for death was reduced to the absorption of rum in unlimited quantities. One Negro was so "prepared" that he had to be lifted onto the Wolf with hoists and kept in the shower for a long time.

The sailboat was called "Deya" and sailed from Mauritius to Western Australia. His crew was processed by English propaganda, which assured that, if captured by the Germans, a terrible death awaited them all. The Germans either kill the prisoners themselves, or throw them to be eaten by sharks. Drunk blacks had to be sanitized before they were allowed into the interior of the Wolf. Products were unloaded from the Dei, and the sailboat itself was flooded. The old captain of the Dei, John Rugg, wept as he watched from the deck of the Wolf as his handsome sailboat perished. Tears rolled down his gray beard. For twenty-two years he served on the Deya, going from sailor to captain...

The Wolf circled Australia from the south, keeping to the southernmost part of the Tasman Sea. In the waters south of New Zealand, Nерger hoped to intercept a steamer carrying food and coal. Although the raider did not yet feel a shortage of coal, most of it was already used up and it would be necessary to think in advance about replenishing fuel supplies.

Nерger hoped that it was in these waters that the route of coal miners supplying South America from the ports of Eastern Australia passed. For several weeks, the Wolf cruised in these waters, but did not meet a single ship. Nерger decided to go north, but he did not meet anyone there either. The Wolf rounded the Antipodes, passed north of the Bounty, and began cruising at the exit of Cook Strait. Not a single ship was found.

Intercepted radio messages reported that the United States had declared war on Germany on April 7th. Some Australian station reported on the serious illness of the Kaiser and his imminent death in the near future. The station also claimed that Germany was on the verge of a military catastrophe and revolution.

A request from the British Admiralty to the governor of the Pago Pago Islands was also intercepted: "Do you know anything about the presence of a German raider in your area? If so, please provide details: what does it look like? How is it painted? What is the shape of its funnel, superstructures, stem and stern? Give its approximate tonnage and the exact time it was seen, in what direction it was heading. Does it have torpedo tubes?"

The following day, the Wolf's radio operators intercepted the governor's reply, who reported that although suspicious lights had been seen in the sea, he could not say anything more specific.

On May 14, the Wolf intercepted another radiogram addressed to a firm in the city of Alia, the capital of the Pago Pago Islands. The radiogram said that the captain of the American schooner Winslow was ready to carry out the firm's order to transfer part of the unnamed cargo from the Pago Pago Islands to Sydney. Then they managed to find out the name of the company - "Gardigs and Co", as well as the fact that the American schooner had already arrived in Aliya and stood up for loading.

The Wolf was north of New Zealand, releasing its seaplane daily on reconnaissance flights. Nothing could be found from the plane either, and on May 22 Nerger approached the Resurrection Islands to sort out the car.

The Wolf anchored in a small bay on the southeastern tip of the island. Once this island was inhabited, but now it is completely abandoned and uninhabited. It was of volcanic origin, as clearly indicated by the burned-out crater and blocks of solidified lava that formed jagged rocks. High hills almost to the very tops are overgrown with dense tropical forest.

During the repair of the car, which took six days, the sailors of the "Wolf" and their captives went fishing, which in the lagoon of the island was simply fabulous. There were forty kilogram fish. Their meat, cooked in the Wolf's galley, tasted amazing.

Around the houses abandoned by the inhabitants, there are whole gardens of orange trees, bending under the weight of juicy and tender fruits. They were collected and transported in whole baskets aboard the ship to decorate the rations of the crew and prisoners. A special hunting team was also sent to the shore to shoot wild goats. In addition to goats, the hunters found some frighteningly huge rats...

During the entire stay, the weather was excellent: Although the car was dismantled, the Wolf was in a bay surrounded by reefs in a state of full combat readiness.

Finally, the mechanic reported to Nerger that the work had been completed. Before the commander of the Wolf had time to listen to the report of the mechanic, the signalman shouted that he saw some kind of steamer. The unknown ship was heading north, radiotelegraphy equipment was clearly visible on it. Apparently, the Wolf was also noticed from the ship, as it began to noticeably increase in speed. Fearing that the unknown ship would be able, using its speed advantage, to get away from it and then give out the presence of the Wolf in these waters, Nerger ordered the plane to be raised, instructing the pilot to drop a packet onto the deck of the ship, which contained a requirement not to use the radio station and change heading south - towards the auxiliary cruiser. As proof of the seriousness of intentions, a bomb was dropped at the bow of the steamer, which exploded with a terrible roar.

The steamer showed a downright touching obedience. He obediently turned around and walked towards the Wolf, not even trying to call for help on the radio. As proof of their loyalty, radio equipment was thrown overboard from the ship.

"Wolf", meanwhile, weighed anchor and went towards the steamer. Having taken on board the floatplane that had landed, Nerger brought the prize into the bay and anchored next to it before dark.

The captured ship turned out to be the New Zealand steamer Vairuna. During this time, the weather deteriorated noticeably, and Nerger ordered to move to the northern tip of the island, where the sea was calmer.

"Wolf" and "Vairuna" moored to each other, and the reloading of coal began, which turned out to be 1150 tons in the bunkers of the New Zealand steamer. Vairuna was heading to San Francisco, from where the Panama Canal was supposed to cross into the Atlantic and follow to England with a cargo of food products. None of the sailors of the Wolf had ever seen such a quantity of products that were in the capacious holds of Vairuna. There was meat, dairy products and cheeses. In addition, there were forty rams on the Vairun in a special paddock, which were also reloaded onto the Wolf, providing the crew of the auxiliary cruiser with fresh meat for a long time. It was necessary to feed the prisoners, whose number was constantly increasing.

In other holds of Vairuna, a cargo of rubber and leather was found. They were also partially reloaded onto the Wolf to partially fill the auxiliary cruiser's empty cargo holds.

The reloading work was greatly hampered by bad weather, and late at night there was something very similar to an earthquake on the seabed. The anchor chain jumped and rattled, and crockery jangled on the tables. "Wolf" brought "Vairuna" into the sea to flood it there. The New Zealand ship turned out to be extremely strong and stubbornly refused to sink, despite the fact that it was undermined by charges in many places. They had to finish him off with artillery fire.

Even before Vairuna sank, Wolf's signalmen saw a four-masted sailboat on the horizon. Leaving the sinking "Vairuna", "Wolf" went to approach him, ordering the sailboat to drift. Then a boat was sent to him with a prize crew, which had orders to bring the sailboat (if the wind allowed) to the anchorage of the island. The weather, meanwhile, was getting worse, and only on the third day the sailboat was towed to the island. It was the American schooner Winslow, about which Nerger already knew enough from the intercepted radio messages. The schooner was heading to Sydney, carrying 325 tons of coal and a special fireclay brick used for laying boilers.

The American sailboat was treated in the same way as with the Vairuna - coal and brick were reloaded onto the Wolf, and the schooner itself was blown up. However, the Winslow had a cement keel, and the schooner refused to sink. She was then doused with gasoline and set on fire. The charred remains of the sailboat were washed up by the surf on the rocks of the island.

From the intercepted British radio messages, Nerger learned that real panic reigned in the Indian Ocean due to the actions, as indicated, of German submarines. Since there could be no submarines in the Indian Ocean, Nerger decided that the German sailing raider Seeadler was operating there. But later it turned out that Seeadler was operating at that time in the Pacific Ocean. Apparently, the mines put up at the time by Wolf and Ittis just continued to explode.

Immediately after leaving the island of Sunday, Nerger was in for a surprise: when checking the prisoners, two people were missing. Apparently, taking advantage of the darkness of cloudy days,

they jumped overboard, hoping to make it to shore. In turn, Nerger really hoped that they would not succeed. The surf was very strong near the coast, and the coastal waters were teeming with sharks.

During the movement of "Wolf" around the island, he was relentlessly followed by several huge sharks, waiting for prey. The sailors of the Wolf are already accustomed to them. Even earlier, during the capture of Jumna and Wordsworth, sharks circled near the raider for a long time. They were often caught, killed, turned into walking sticks from shark spines and sorted out teeth for souvenirs in the hope of bringing them home after returning. In addition, since sea legend said that shark fins brought happiness to the ship, the fins of especially large sharks were fixed on the nose of the Wolf, and so firmly that even storm waves could not wash them away.

#### IV

The stream of intercepted radiograms clearly indicated the heightened nervousness of the British. The disappearance of several merchant ships in the region between Australia and New Zealand has caused an avalanche of rumors. The Americans captured on the Winslow said that the captain of one of the neutral ships was arrested in Sydney on charges of sabotage.

Nerger decided to continue operations in the Tasman Sea, setting up several minefields there. The first victim of German mines was the English refrigerator "Cumberland" with a displacement of 9000 tons, en route from Sydney with a cargo of frozen meat. This time everything happened almost right in front of the sailors of the Wolf.

On July 6, a radio message was intercepted in which the Cumberland reported that she had hit a mine ten miles from Cape Gabo and asked for help. The first to respond to the signal for help was a Japanese cruiser, which in turn asked where Cape Gabo was.

The Cumberland radiogram was also received in Sydney, informing the Cumberland that a ship had already left Jervis Bay to help. Then the Japanese cruiser appeared on the air again, announcing that, according to the information available to him, the Cumberland was not blown up by a mine, but became a victim of an internal explosion. The Japanese asked to confirm this message to him, since such a detail was very important in providing assistance.

After that, the radio was silent for several hours.

Then someone said that the Cumberland was moving on under its own power. The English were pleased, of course, but Nerger had no reason to rejoice. The mood of the commander of the "Wolf" was raised by the Japanese cruiser, which gave birth to an unexpectedly long radiogram.

"At 23:00," the Japanese reported, "I approached the Cumberland and landed a group of specialists on board. The ship had a list of twenty-one to port. The situation could be considered critical, and the crew was removed from the steamer. I intend to spend the night near the Cumberland, and at dawn I will report whether it is possible to save him or not. The explosion on the ship occurred at 08:40 when she was twelve miles south (half a degree west) of Cape Gabo. The ship anchored, and the crew made an attempt to close the hole, but this was not possible. The ship began to sink headlong and list to port. The captain claims the explosion was internal."

No more messages about the Cumberland could be intercepted. Only three weeks later, a newspaper fell into the hands of Nerger, where a short message was printed: "In the last week we have lost the Cumberland and its very valuable cargo." Nerger was sure that the mine-damaged steamer had been finished off by a violent storm that night. Many newspapers that fell on the Wolf from captured ships spoke of the death of ships from "internal explosions" throughout the ocean. The matter again reached the British Parliament, which made a corresponding request to the Government. The government again found it "untimely" to discuss the matter publicly. But, as several more ships were blown up on the mines of the Wolf, the English newspapers declared that the solution to these catastrophes was becoming clearer and finally announced that the culprit of all these explosions was the World Secret Organization of Proletarians, whose agents in various ports of the world establish on ships "infernal machines" with clockwork. The newspapers demanded that extraordinary measures be taken against these terrorists. There was even a £5,000 reward for their capture.

Anyone who reported these saboteurs was guaranteed anonymity and exemption from liability if he himself took part in such sabotage. Photographs of "infernal machines" allegedly found on various ships were published. The picture showed a lump of cotton and some kind of white liquid. The caption read: "With the help of this means, the 'world proletariat' is sinking allied ships."

In the wardroom of the Wolf, they laughed heartily at these newspaper reports. The exposed mines worked better than the "hellish machines of the world proletariat." Barrages, put up in January 1917 at Cape Town, brought results in nine months. In September, a message was received that another ship had been blown up in the area.

Mines laid off Bombay in February sank Allied shipping until July, when the last credible report was received. And about the explosions in the Tasman Sea, the sailors of the Wolf could read in the newspapers after returning to their homeland ...

Keeping a course to the northeast, the Wolf, meanwhile, left the Tasman Sea and headed for the Fiji Islands in the Pacific Ocean; For many days the ocean was deserted, but at last the signalmen of the Wolf discovered another sailing ship, which turned out to be the American whaling schooner Beluga, carrying barrels of gasoline to the islands of Polynesia. This was very helpful, since the supply of gasoline for Wolfchen was running out.

The crew of the sailboat, food supplies and the right amount of gasoline for the seaplane migrated to the Wolf, after which the schooner was burned. It was an enchanting sight, especially when the remaining barrels of gasoline began to burst on the Beluga. Flaming barrels were thrown into the sea by an explosive wave, and in the advancing darkness on the surface, here and there, a frantic dance of fiery whirlwinds began. The captain of the Beluga, Cameron, took his wife and six-year-old daughter with him. They wanted to take the captain's wife aboard the Wolf on a wicker chair, but she herself climbed the storm ladder. Following her, the captain himself rose, holding his daughter in his arms. Nerger ordered that an officer's cabin be made available to them. The captain's wife at first kept calm and courageous. But when the meaning of what happened came to her, and she realized that the planned meeting with her mother in Sydney was postponed indefinitely, the woman had a nervous breakdown, however, quickly passed. A few days later the whole family already felt at home on the raider.

Their charming girl Juanita (on the Wolf she was simply called Anita) quickly became friends with everyone aboard the Wolf. She had blond, boyishly short hair, blue eyes and an angelic face. She ran around the ship in her boyish color suit. khaki and only on Sundays changed into a white dress. The girl made a special friendship with Paul, the pilot of the Wolfchen, who in

Germany left a daughter of about the same age. Paul became her confidant, to whom the girl "secretly" told about all her pranks, and he gave her advice on how to get out of this or that situation. She addressed the pilot only as "dear Paul" or "Darling." The commander of the "Wolf" declared the naughty Anita "a guest of the wardroom", where the little American dined with the officers.

Anita was a terrible tomboy. With the instinct of a child, she quickly realized that everyone on the ship adored her, and therefore she did everything that came to her mind. She ran about everywhere, jumped on the deck, ran along the ladders, looked into all the rooms and stuck her little nose into everything that was possible. Every day Anita came up with new pranks.

Due to the unbearable heat and stuffiness, the watchmen were forced to sleep on the upper deck. Anita, like an Indian on a military path, crept up to the sleeping ones, armed with a thread or a piece of wool, and began to tickle their noses. The sneezing of the "tormented" brought her into indescribable delight. She could lie down between the sleeping ones and tickle them until they did not jump.

For such feats, Anita was first nicknamed the "fidget", and then she received the nickname "Scourge of the ship." Having done something, she rushed to the flight, and being caught, she immediately defeated the pursuer with her German language, which she learned in a surprisingly short time.

Anita, who are you? - asked the sailor, who became the next victim of her pranks.

"I'm a nice little girl," Anita chirped quickly in German.

"No, no," the sailor who caught her disagreed.

- It is not true.

Anita thought for a moment, then announced:

- I am a ship's scourge!

This statement, like a password, like "Open Sesame", always returned her freedom.

But the Wolf, being a warship after all, was not well adapted for such guests as Anita. I had to complain to her father so that he would reason with her a little. Her father, Captain Cameron, was a very pleasant man with an honest, intelligent face that did not match the German idea of Americans. Having learned what nickname his daughter had earned on the ship, Captain Cameron forbade her to behave in this way and did not let her on deck at all for several days. For a while, her father's intervention bore fruit: the girl became withdrawn and behaved more well-mannered. But soon everything went on as usual, and the little imp continued to terrorize the ship.

Before going to bed, like all children, Anita always prayed, the prayer was beautiful, long and purely American, vaguely reminiscent of the "Our Father": "God keep fathers, mothers and sisters in Your house. God bless all people and Santa Claus too." Santa Claus was included in the prayer for bringing presents to children at Christmas. Anita later included the auxiliary cruiser Wolf, her entire crew, and especially "dear Paul" in her prayer. At the same time, part of the prayer was already read in German. The girl did not even suspect that her country and the sailors of the Wolf were at war!

When an orchestra played on the Wolf at noon, she asked "dear Paul" to lift her up to put her head into the bell of the helicon, and laughed merrily at the same time.

Anita's supply of desires was inexhaustible. One day, the desire to dance came to her mind. And since a lady always needs a gentleman for this purpose, she burst into the pilot's cabin and resolutely demanded that he dance with her. Here she ran into fierce resistance - she categorically did not want to dance "Darling". Anita was upset, but didn't give up. Having caught one of the signalmen on the deck, she tortured him until the "unfortunate" began to circle around the deck with her. One day, frolicking as usual, Anita tore her beautiful white dress. She ran to Paul, terribly worried that she would get a good beating from her parents for this. The pilot summoned a tailor to his cabin, and the dress was irreproachably restored to its original form in half an hour.

The girl loved to play different children's games. For example, she liked to dance, singing: "In the round dance there are roses, violets, apricots, forget-me-not flowers and little children." But she alone could not make a round dance; for this game, several participants were needed. Anita chose a place for an ambush and, with the swiftness of a snake, pounced on those passing by. Moreover, it did not matter to her whether it was some sailor or the commander of the ship himself. Caught, she forced to dance with her, teaching American children's songs. Being a born hunter, Anita gathered five or six participants in a round dance in a few minutes.

In addition to the pilot, Anita's best friend was the chief engineer's messenger Augustus, a sailor of enormous stature who did not look for a soul in her. Anita enjoyed universal love, and although, at times, they were angry with her, everyone considered the little American woman a "timid ray of sunshine" who broke through the black clouds of the world war.

V

The Wolf had not yet had time to properly digest the Beluga, when another American schooner fell into its mouth - the four-masted Jinkora, en route from North America to Sydney with a load of timber. She was captured quickly, without much fuss, the crew was transported to the Wolf, and the sailboat was doused with gasoline and burned.

Passing by the Fiji Islands and not meeting anyone, the Wolf headed for the Solomon Islands - closer to the former German possessions in New Guinea. There were wonderful sunny days. On one of these days, signalmen discovered a three-masted sailboat. Sailboats used to carry coal along this route, and Nergel decided to capture it in order to replenish coal supplies once again. The masts of the sailboat in some strange way either rose above the ocean swell, then disappeared again. The pursuit lasted about half an hour, but it was not possible to get close to the sailboat, although there was a complete calm, and under sails it was only possible to drift. Finally, through powerful binoculars, it was possible to see that fountains of water released by a flock of whales were mistaken for the masts of the sailboat. A common optical illusion in the tropics.

On July 28, radio operators intercepted a radio message sent to Rabaul, which said that a certain Donaldsen left Sydney on July 27 with a cargo of coal for various island stations, including Rabaul. Rabaul, the former administrative center of the German possessions in the area, was now captured by the British.

On the bridge of the Wolf, they puzzled over who this Donaldsen could be, when on July 29 he announced this himself in another radiogram: "July 29, 20:00. Matunga arrived in Brisbane. On Monday, by noon, I expect to be at Cape Moreton.

It was very kind of Donaldsen (and it could only be him) to send to

"Wolf" notification of his arrival. Nerger consulted the map and concluded that the Matunga was heading straight for him. Not later than August 5, the ship should approach the region where the Wolf was cruising. Nerger decided to wait for the Matunga, reversing his decision to proceed further north.

In anticipation of the Matunga, the Wolfchen rose into the air every day, trying to find the steamer in advance. The fifth of August arrived, but nothing could be found. But, as soon as the plane landed on the water and was taken aboard, another intercepted radiogram sent by Captain Donaldsen to Rabaul was brought to the bridge to Nerger. In it, the captain notified the local port authorities that he would come to Rabaul on the morning of the seventh of August, and asked that the necessary arrangements be made so that he could reload the coal directly to the Barrows.

On the bridge of the Wolf, they were perplexed: what else is a Burrows? We dug into reference books and found that the only ship with a similar name is an American destroyer. He must be in Rabaul waiting for coal.

The Matunga was already nearby and was to hit the Wolf's teeth no later than tomorrow morning, if nothing unexpected happened. Nerger turned the ship around and at low speed went towards the Matunga. Late at night, the lights of the ship appeared to the right of the stern.

At dawn, the "Wolf" rushed to his prey. The ship was stopped and a boat with a prize crew was sent to it. When the commander of the prize party, addressing the captain by name, inquired how much coal he had for the Burrows, Donaldsen lost his tongue from bewilderment - how did the Germans know the secret information? The fact that he himself divulged it on the radio, the captain did not guess.

The Matunga carried a fair number of passengers, among them Australian soldiers and two doctors, the eldest of whom, Brigadier General of the Medical Service Strangman, was on his way to Rabaul to take over as lieutenant governor. His companion, Medical Major Flood, was traveling with his wife. There was also an English stewardess named Maria on board the Matunga. On the Wolf, she was immediately nicknamed "Mary Steward" - in consonance with Mary Stuart, although the stewardess, as Nerger gently answered, did not belong to a particularly beautiful representative of her sex.

The Australian officers and all other personnel were immediately transferred to the Wolf, while the civilians were allowed to temporarily stay on the Matung. Captain Donaldsen also boarded the Wolf, first of all inquiring where was his cabin? He then reported that a case of champagne had been left in his cabin on the Matung and asked to be transported to the Wolf, reasonably remarking that "there is nothing to drink tea when there is champagne." At the same time, the Burrows mystery was also resolved. It turned out that this was not the name of an American destroyer, but the surname of the English captain of the German yacht Komet captured in Rabaul, renamed Una by the British.

In addition to coal, there was a lot of other valuable cargo on the Matung: three and a half tons of frozen meat, two tons of frozen fish, a lot of alcohol, a whole container of tropical helmets and hats, many different toilet trifles, the lack of which was felt on the Wolf. It was a prize one could only dream of. They even found galvanized cases for storing linen and documents in tropical conditions. Finally, three horses were found aboard the Matunga.

At first, Nerger was tempted to try to get a steamer with such a valuable cargo to Germany. But the commander of the "Wolf" quickly became convinced that with such a low speed as the "Matunga" possessed, this could not be done. Nerger decided to take the Matunga to



some quiet cove and there to enable the "Wolf" to "torn apart the prey."

The unloading of the Matunga lasted two weeks. This time was used by Nerger to clean the boilers and the heavily overgrown bottom on the Wolf. The bay where the Wolf brought the Matunga was small and cozy. An impenetrable tropical forest descended to the very water - no gap, no path. But the island was inhabited. A small river flowed into the bay, on the banks of which grew mango trees, and behind them dark jungle entwined with lianas.

People worked on unloading, divided into shifts, tirelessly. The signalmen, however, carefully watched the coast, where a lot of interesting things happened. Suddenly, the trunks of rotten trees lying near the water began to move and turned into giant crocodiles. From time to time, huge sea snakes, which were not seen in any atlas, began to swarm with a whirlpool near the side of the Wolf. And one day, under the huge palm leaves hanging into the water, a shadow appeared that looked like a long brown spider. It turned out that it was a native pirogue that had flashed like lightning along the shore of the bay.

A few days later, the natives grew bolder, and their pirogues came aboard the Wolf. The native boats were stuffed with selected coconuts and pineapples, which they exchanged for all sorts of little things, like old knives and tobacco. The clothes of the natives consisted of a loincloth, and some did not even have it - only a bracelet around their neck. Wooden, beautifully carved sticks were stuck in a mop of their coarse, curly hair, with which they scratched vigorously, if necessary, without paying attention to the onlookers. And the need happened almost constantly.

Nerger with a group of officers and sailors visited the shore, where he admired the indescribable range of tropical colors, shimmer and play of colors. White, green, blue and red parrots sat on the trees and flew from branch to branch. Large cockatoos also flew aboard the Wolf. The natives on this island were peaceful, ready to exchange anything for tobacco. In addition, they loved to be photographed, while taking theatrical poses, and the photographs themselves caused them violent joy.

While the crew of the Wolf, enjoying the exotic, was unloading the Matunga, a conspiracy among the prisoners of war was ripening on the Wolf.

Once one of the sailors-escorts, who accompanied the prisoners during walks along the upper deck, witnessed a strange conversation that took place between an Australian and a Japanese. Standing at the bulwark, they whispered about something, pointing fingers at the shore. The conversation seemed suspicious to the escort, which he reported on command. Did the Australian and the Japanese agree to escape?

Nerger decided to take action. A machine gun was placed on the bridge, and the number of sentries armed with rifles and revolvers was increased on deck. At night, the entire ship was brightly lit, keeping the searchlights ready. Having taken all the necessary measures, Nerger believed that he could sleep peacefully.

But the very next night, the commander of the Wolf was awakened by an alarm, which had been prearranged in the event of an escape of the prisoners. Nerger heard the thump of feet on the deck and the rumble of rifle shots. The commander of the "Wolf" jumped out of his cabin:

- What's happened?

Several voices answered him in chorus:

- Prisoners overboard! Swim to the shore!

A dozen hands showed Nerger the direction in which the prisoners were swimming. It was a dark tropical night, lit only by a myriad of stars twinkling in the sky. Peering into the darkness, Nerger noticed a small dot moving for some reason not towards the shore, but across the bay. The commander of the "Wolf" found this strange. The beam of the searchlight glided over the surface of the water, and in its light Nerger saw many black dots floating in different directions. Sailors stood all around the bulwark, firing their rifles at the surface of the water. A machine gun rumbled from the bridge. But the black dots, which Nerger mistook for the heads of the fugitives, continued to float around the bay. There are even more of them.

Only gradually was it possible to restore the picture of this night incident. The captured sailors, like the sailors of the Wolf, slept in hanging berths, which were arranged in rows one above the other. So it was almost impossible to move around the deck at night, except by crawling. At the door of the room with the prisoners there was always a sentry armed with a revolver. That night, shortly before his shift, the sentry noticed how one of the prisoners silently got out of his hammock naked, went down to the deck and, backing away like a cancer, began to approach the sentry on all fours.

For some reason, the sentry decided that he wanted to run away, pulled out a revolver and shot at prisoner.

For the deck watch, this shot became an alarm signal. A minute later, the entire crew was on their feet. What, in fact, was the matter, no one knew, but with the speed of lightning a rumor spread, passing from mouth to mouth and acquiring details, about the mass escape of prisoners. If at first it was about one fugitive, then they began to talk about six and ten. Someone seemed to see them floating in the water, and the machine gunners saw a dozen or two heads on the surface and opened fire.

When Nerger appeared on deck, he was informed that a whole group of prisoners had escaped - at least twenty people. Wild firing from rifles continued for some time, while the commander understood the situation. Nerger found out that the unfortunate prisoner, whom he shot, but, fortunately, did not hit the sentry, was about to go out to need. It never even crossed his mind to throw himself overboard. A quick check showed that all the prisoners were in place. The black dots, mistaken for the heads of the fugitives, turned out to be crocodiles frolicking in the water, which, apparently, were not bothered by the shooting at all. The embarrassed sailors dispersed to their places...

While the "Wolf" was in this picturesque bay, Nerger ordered to equip additional living quarters for prisoners. On the upper deck, near the searchlight, a luxurious cabin was built, where Lieutenant Governor Strangman, Major Flood and his wife, and three other Australian officers from the Matunga were placed.

Some difficulties arose with the "Mary Steward". On the Matung, she acted as a maid to the wife of an Australian major, receiving a salary for this. Once on the "Wolf", "Maria Steward" said that now everyone is equal and she is not going to serve anyone. Nerger told her to tell her that he wanted to allow her to eat with the captured officers, but since she rebelled, she would eat with the sailors. The uprising was crushed, and the "Mary Steward" was put at the mercy of the captured officers.

Shortly before leaving the bay, three horses found on the Matung were slaughtered. The initiator of this not too humane act was Nerger himself, motivating this need mainly by the nutritional value and usefulness of horse meat. This caused indignation of a good half of the wardroom. The officers - opponents of horse meat, having warned Nerger that they would not even touch it, urged the commander to spare the horses and bring them to the shore.

- So that the natives beat them there or wild animals lifted them up? Nerger objected, urging the officers not to spread sentimental snot, but rather to eat meat. He is obliged to take care of the health of his people first of all, and for health it is necessary to eat fresh meat. By voting, lovers of fresh meat won.

The wardroom on the Wolf was located above the commander's cabin, and Nerger could hear the officers galloping to dinner when meat dishes were on the menu. Having ordered the horses to be slaughtered and skinned, Nerger ordered the cooks not to disclose to the officers what meat dishes were prepared from: horse meat or not.

When the meatloaf was served to the officers the next day, especially stubborn admirers of horses declared that they would not touch horse meat, although the roll was not from horse meat. A day later, the word "hot" was put on the menu. "Roast horse meat does not happen," the wardroom decided, and again they made a mistake. Roast was from horsemeat. But the officers pounced on the roast with an appetite that Nerger had never seen before. When the roast was over, the commander revealed the truth to his officers. They did not believe, then Nerger called the chief cook as a witness. Horse lovers were confused, but more  
did not refuse horse meat ...

Meanwhile, the Matunga was completely unloaded. All the garbage accumulated on the Wolf was brought to it, taken to deep water and flooded there.

## VI

In early September 1917, the Wolf, leaving the waters of the Dutch East Indies behind the stern, headed for Singapore, in the area where Nerger was going to lay mines.

The heat was unbearable. Once, as in the Fiji Islands, signalmen observed a mirage. They clearly saw a Dutch destroyer rocking on the waves, conducting practice firing. Upon closer inspection, the "destroyer" turned out to be a cluster of cormorants hunting for flying fish.

The captive Major Flood turned to Nerger for permission to sleep on the upper deck because of the incredible stuffiness in the cabin. Nerger didn't mind, although he didn't guarantee the Major that his sleep would not be disturbed. In the event of an alarm on the ship, the major was to immediately disappear from the upper deck, taking his mattress with him.

In the area where the Wolf was now located, an encounter with English warships was very likely, and Nerger ordered the signalmen to increase their observation of the horizon.

Before Nerger had time to go down to his cabin in order to rest a little, a messenger ran up from the bridge, reporting from the words of the watch officer that some ship with extinguished lights had been found right on the course. Nerger hurried back to the bridge. The night was moonlit and clear. A silvery lunar path ran across the water, making the view beautiful. Nerger immediately identified the unknown vessel as an English light cruiser. He saw the cruiser turn around and pass along the port side of the Wolf. Nerger ordered to break through the combat alarm. Although the situation was very serious, Nerger had a good time watching Dr. Flood and his wife, whose undisturbed sleep was disturbed by battle anxiety, try to retire from the upper deck, weaving half-dressed among the sailors fleeing to battle posts. In the end, they managed to get to their cabin, where they lay down to sleep.

On the bridge of the Wolf, the actions of the English cruiser were closely monitored. He noticed

Wolf or not? The vague silhouette of the enemy ship became clearer - two funnels and two masts, a light burned in the wheelhouse. At any moment, the cruiser could give the Wolf an order to stop. The distance between the ships was about four thousand meters.

Nerger frantically considered his next steps.

Maybe fire a torpedo at the Englishman? But will it hit at that distance? The stakes were very high, and Nerger decided to refrain from rash actions. If the torpedo passes by, then the Wolf will have a very bad time. Even if he doesn't die, his raid will come to an end one way or another.

As a result, Nerger considered it wisest to pretend that he simply did not notice the cruiser, and calmly went on his course. The English cruiser, on which everyone seemed to be sleeping, did not react to this in any way.

Laying mines off Singapore, Nerger passed through the Java Sea, slipped through the Torres Strait, and re-entered the Indian Ocean, heading southwest. Having passed the traverse of Colombo, the Wolf turned towards Madagascar. The ocean was deserted - neither warships nor merchant ships of the enemy were visible.

Only on September 27, when the Wolf was in the area of the Maldives, its signalmen discovered a column of smoke behind the stern. The Wolfchen was lifted into the air, reporting after a short reconnaissance that the source of the smoke was a freighter moving south-west at a speed of about five knots.

It was noon. Nerger ordered the crew to have dinner, and then turned the Wolf around and went towards the discovered vessel. About one o'clock in the afternoon it appeared in visibility. The Wolfchen was again launched into the water, flying out with the task of delaying this steamer until the Wolf approached.

Approaching the ship for about a quarter of a mile, the pilot signaled: "Stop! Don't use the radio!

Raising the German flag, "Wolf" lay down on a course parallel to the course of the intercepted ship. It turned out to be the Japanese cargo ship Hitachi-Mar, which had a gun at the stern. The ship did not obey either the signal from the Wolfchen or the signal from the Wolf, raising only the flag "I see clearly." The Japanese showed that they understood everything, but were not going to obey. The Hitachi-Mar began, siren buzzing, to turn back on its course, turning towards the Wolf's stern, where the gun was stationed. From the bridge of the Wolf, it was clear that the Japanese sailors uncovered the gun and quickly aimed it at the Wolf.

A warning shot was fired from the Wolf under the nose of the Hitachi Maru. But the Japanese ship was not going to stop.

Nerger ordered a second warning shot fired.

The only effect was the return fire that the Hitachi-Mar opened with its only gun. The shell, whistling over the masts of the Wolf, fell into the sea.

Nerger, gritting his teeth, ordered to open fire to kill.

The very first Wolf shell exploded on the deck of a Japanese ship and swept people off it. Several gunners, busy at the gun, fell on the deck, but they were immediately replaced by new ones. The Japanese have always been distinguished by their militancy.

Wolf fired a second salvo, then a third. The dead and wounded fell on the deck of the Hitachi-Mar, but the ship did not stop, but began to lower the boats on the move. Only

when a larger number of the crew entered the boats, the Hitachi-Maruru slowed down and, pulling the balls up to the place, stopped.

A boat with a prize crew went from the Wolf to the Japanese ship, but before she had time to move away from the side of the auxiliary cruiser, the Hitachi-Maruru radio station started working, notifying the whole world about what had happened and sending distress signals.

The Wolf opened fire again, and its radio operators tried to drown out the signals given by the radio station of the Japanese ship.

One of the Wolf's shells destroyed the Hitachi-Maruru's radio room, killing or injuring everyone there. Another shell on a Japanese ship damaged the rudder.

A whole flotilla of boats and boats left the stopped steamer. It was clear that there were many passengers on board the steamer.

So far, Nerger's main concern has been the modern 120-millimeter gun, which, although silenced after two shots, could well resume firing. The main task of the "Wolf" was to fight the enemy's sea trade, and not a battle with anyone else, since any victory could become "pyrrhic" - after all, the damage received was nowhere to be repaired. And any projectile from the Japanese could damage the car or the steering wheel, turning the "wolf" into a helpless lamb. Nerger was guided by such premises, believing that he did not violate international law. This right, according to the commander, was violated by the Japanese captain, who endangered the lives of his passengers, knowing that resistance was hopeless.

However, the Japanese captain acted in accordance with the instructions of his Admiralty. But it turned out that these instructions determined his behavior in the event of an encounter with a submarine, and not with an auxiliary cruiser. As a result, twenty people died on the Hitachi Maru, many passengers were injured and needed urgent medical attention.

Hydroplane "Wolfchen" took part in the battle, dropping a bomb, which he tried to disable the Japanese gun. Then, due to a motor failure, Wolfchen was forced to land on the water. Having lifted the plane on board, Nerger went to catch the Japanese boats, which scattered across the sea in all directions. Many had to be lifted straight out of the water.

Having delivered all the passengers and crew of the Hitachi-Maruru to the Wolf, the prize crew boarded the ship itself, which by that time had been completely abandoned by everyone, including the captain and chief engineer. The Japanese captain, who was already on board the Wolf, demanded that he be taken back to the ship entrusted to him and given the opportunity to die with him. This was not the fanaticism of the captain himself, but the course of action prescribed by the Japanese Admiralty.

The commander and chief engineer were returned to the Hitachi Maru to assist in the repair of their beautiful vessel. First of all, the dead were buried on the Hitachi Maru. A slain enemy is no longer an enemy and is worthy of all honors.

The dead Japanese were buried in full accordance with the naval ritual: the Japanese captain delivered a funeral speech, a prayer in Japanese and a triple salute from the rifles of the prize team sounded. After that, the dead were handed over to the sea.

Meanwhile, the German mechanics who arrived from the Wolf began repairing the rudder and the air intake of the boiler ventilation.

About eight o'clock in the evening, the repair work was completed, and the Wolf took his prize to

one of the bays of a small atoll in the ridge of the Maldives. The Hitachi Maru anchored. It was the second ship with this name that Japan lost. The first died during the Russo-Japanese War.

Only now the German sailors could calmly inspect their prize. The entire space near the broken gun was spattered with blood. The castle is open. Under it lay a shell, apparently dropped from the hands of a dead loader. Most of the Wolf shells hit this part of the ship. Fortunately, the Wolf shells did not cause much damage. There was one hole above the waterline, but it was quickly patched up.

The ship itself, as Nerger's experienced eye had already noted, was excellent and very suitable for accommodating prisoners. The speed of the Hitachi-Maruk was greater than that of the Wolf - thirteen knots. There was more than enough coal in the pits. But if the Japanese ship itself was recognized as remarkable, then its cargo generally exceeded all expectations of Nerger and his people. Even a rough estimate of the value of the cargo exceeded fifty million pounds. The Hitachi Maru, bound for London as the "Christmas Boat", carried an expensive and varied assortment of goods. There was raw rubber, bags of tea, rolls of fine silks, ingots of copper and brass, toys, rice, flour and beans, and lobster carcasses. All this was expected by the inhabitants of London by Christmas, but all the abundance went to the German corsairs from the auxiliary cruiser Wolf.

Part of the Japanese crew was returned to the ship to put it in full order and prepare to receive passengers. It was planned to transfer women and children to the Hitachi Maru, as well as non-military men - primarily those who were already over sixty years old.

All the holes on the Japanese steamer, caused by Wolf shells, were sealed and filled with cement. During the repair work, boards from Wolf mine racks were used. Nerger donated some of his spare equipment. The steamer's chimney, riddled with shrapnel, was patched up.

Nerger planned to take the Hitachi Maru with him and bring the ship to Germany, but just in case, he ordered the most valuable part of the cargo to be reloaded on the Wolf, based on the fact that things could go in such a way that the Japanese would have to be flooded. In addition, the Wolf, having used up almost all the mines, most of the ammunition and coal, dangerously climbed out of the water, and Nerger wanted to load it properly.

After standing at the atoll for three days, the "Wolf" again went hunting. This time they had to get coal for themselves and for the Hitachi-Maruk, so that it would be enough for the transition to Germany. The Japanese ship remained in the bay, work continued on it.

For some time, the Wolf cruised not far from the atoll, waiting for new prey, but did not wait for anything. The sea was deserted.

Only on the night of the fifth day of cruising did two ships appear. One of them, apparently neutral, was brightly lit. The second one went with extinguished lights at a speed much higher than the speed of the Wolf. Barely noticing the Wolf, the darkened ship turned around and went towards him. The vessel looked like an English auxiliary cruiser, and Nerger ordered the torpedo tubes to be ready for action. Nerger perceived the maneuver of the unknown ship as hostile. The commander of the Wolf waited without firing torpedoes, although he understood that such a delay could be fatal for him.

The ship passed right astern of the Wolf. It was armed. On his poop deck, the sailors were busy with something. Apparently, they were preparing a weapon for battle. But this did not provoke Nerger to open fire. Meanwhile, the commander of the "Wolf" came to the conclusion that in front of him was not an auxiliary cruiser, but rather a passenger steamer with a displacement of about

ten thousand tons. Passing behind the stern of the Wolf, the steamer turned around and lay down on her previous course, moving at a speed of at least fifteen knots - one and a half times faster than the Wolf.

Stopping ships at night is a very risky business, because it is impossible to take into account the thousands of surprises that may arise. Nerger decided to wait until morning. He didn't want to turn on the spotlight either. All neutral shipping was controlled by the British, and the captain of the "neutral" could be in trouble if he did not inform the British about the "Wolf" in the nearest port.

The Wolf followed the darkened ship until dawn, still seeing navigation lights on the horizon. But also potential, the prey managed to go far - beyond the range of fire of the guns of the auxiliary cruiser. It was also not possible to set Wolfchen on him because of the large wave. Reluctantly, Nerger ordered the return course.

The days of tedious waiting for new prey flowed again. During this time, the Hitachi Maru should have been missed, and Nerger did not rule out the possibility that a whole squadron of English cruisers would come out of Colombo to search for a Japanese ship. In other words, it's time to get out of this area. Nerger sent a hydroplane to the atoll where the Hitachi Maru was anchored, with orders for the former Japanese ship to go to sea, and he himself cruised south of the archipelago for another week. But no one got caught. Having stopped searching in the area, Nerger headed for Mauritius to see if anyone on the highway south of Madagascar would fall into the jaws of a hungry wolf.

It seemed that luck completely turned away from the Wolf. The signalmen peered in vain at the desert horizon. Not a haze! The Wolf cruised off Mauritius for a long time. There was no result, and coal reserves were melting every day. There was nowhere to take coal, except for the Hitachi-Marun bunkers. But if we take Japanese coal, then Hitachi-Maru cannot be brought to Germany. It was a pity to sink a Japanese steamer, but it was necessary to obey the realities. The only alternative could be the flooding of the Wolf itself. But, nevertheless, Nerger decided to save the precious cargo and, having found a good stop and a coral reef north of Mauritius, he proceeded to unload the Hitachi Maru. The deeper the German sailors climbed into the bottomless holds of the Japanese cargo ship, the more they found what Nerger himself, without going into details, defined as something "beautiful and very expensive." The commander of the "Wolf" was also pleased with the fact that he managed to snatch such a "precious jackpot" from the hands of the enemy.

Despite the fact that the Hitachi Maru was unloaded around the clock, this work took three weeks.

The boats approaching the Wolf met friendly barking, meowing, screeching, howling, bleating, grunting, quacking, clucking and even croaking. It seemed that the "Wolf" was not a combat raider, but a medium-sized floating zoo that could do honor to any provincial city.

Not that Nerger decided to turn the auxiliary cruiser entrusted to him into some kind of Noah's Ark, or allowed him to have the whole menagerie on board. He simply did not forbid, and the menagerie gradually accumulated by itself.

Nerger admitted that it was beyond his power to keep an eye on all this zoo, although he sometimes made timid attempts to restore order there.

The first to appear on board was a young cat, Evkhen, who was dragged aboard Nerger's adjutant in the pocket of his overcoat just before the exit, assuring the commander that he had received the kitten as a gift from a friend for good luck. Nerger finally reconciled, recognizing the graceful Evkhen as the most beautiful kitty he had ever seen. She was

exceptionally clean, constantly licking her silky gray fur.

Early in the morning, when the commander of the "Wolf" woke up, Evkhen appeared in the cabin, settled down behind the curtain and carefully watched how Nerger dressed and put himself in order. If the commander gathered for too long, Evkhen began to meow loudly, as if informing Nerger that breakfast was ready. Then Evkhen wanted to find out what was served for breakfast, and if there was something she wanted to eat, she did not allow the commander to start breakfast before her.

Since he had to stay on the bridge for a long time at night, Nerger, if the situation allowed, fell asleep after dinner on the sofa in the traveling cabin. Evkhen would immediately appear and settle down on the sofa next to him.

Nerger gave the kitty complete freedom of action, as the little animal did not tolerate any restrictions, not to mention violence. When Nerger slept in the bunk of his regular cabin, Evkhen climbed under his blanket in such a way that only her pink nose stuck out from under it. She ran after the commander to the bridge and could stay there for hours, looking at the moon.

When cats from the captured ships appeared on the Wolf, of course, they immediately began to flirt with Evkhen. Evkhen responded to flirting, but kept all the cats at a distance. Nerger decided to "marry" his pet to a gorgeous Spanish cat that appeared on the Wolf after another operation. However, he quickly had rivals in the form of a German fat man named Peter and a captive English cat. All of them were madly in love with the silver-gray beauty Evkhen, and at night the ship resounded with their battle cries. Cat Peter - a kind fat German - was so spoiled by his master that he was not able to fight with the Spanish and English cats, having completely lost his combat form. All cat fights, as a rule, took place in a small garden, which Nerger ordered to be laid out in front of his camping cabin. Roses, palm trees, oranges, grapes, figs and many other exotic plants grew there, which, unfortunately, could not be brought to Germany.

All cats were distinguished by excellent cleanliness, which could not be said about most of the dogs on board.

When leaving Germany, there were four dachshunds and a pinscher on the Wolf, and at the end of the voyage no one could accurately count them. The dogs were small, medium and large - like a huge dog from some French ship. The most frisky were dachshunds, the number of which doubled. They rampaged throughout the ship, bursting into cabins and turning everything upside down there. The funniest was Shtum, who was called a cross between a donkey and a bat. Somehow Shtum's right ear suddenly stood up like a candle, causing everyone's bewilderment. What was it from? Then the right ear returned to its original position, but the left one stood up. Everyone agreed it was a nightmare!

But the worst was waiting for the sailors of the "Wolf" ahead. After a while, the left ear also dropped, and a week later both rose, and they remained there, like a pinscher. Then everything became clear. It turns out that Shtum's girlfriend, Bibi, became friends with the pinscher, and the frustrated Shtum, in order to return her, acquired ears like a pinscher, believing that Bibi pecked at them ...

Unfortunately, all dogs, especially dachshunds, had one common and very bad habit - to put their little "mines" everywhere. To eliminate these "mines" on the ship, a special "mine-sweeping" service was organized. Gradually, this service acquired the necessary skills, and it became safe to walk around the ship without the risk of being blown up somewhere.



From the Hitachi Maru to the Wolf, a small monkey Phipse moved - she herself is very similar to a Japanese girl. The animal was extremely funny and cheerful. Phipse's favorite place was the piano in the officer's wardroom, from which the monkey preferred to enjoy life. One day, Nerger noticed how dachshunds gathered near the piano, whining, looking dejectedly at the monkey. Dachshunds also wanted to climb on the piano. One of them, named Lotchen, jumped onto a chair, from where Pipse dragged her by the tail onto the piano. A minute later, in the same way, all the dachshunds found themselves on the piano.

Pipse loved warmth, and when it got colder she climbed into the rabbitry, pressing the rabbits to her with both paws. So she warmed herself, smiling quite at the same time. Unfortunately, tragedy struck Phipse. When it got colder, the monkey went to live in a stoker, where it always spun around near the fireboxes and eventually burned out.

The little boar Yumbo was originally from New Guinea, where he was exchanged with the natives for two penknives. He was considered a champion in "boxing" due to his constant victorious fights with dogs, putting them to flight with strong blows from his snout. As a prize after a successful fight, Yumbo received a bowl of cocoa from his admirers, which he drank in one fell swoop. An hour later, Yumbo was lying on the deck and seemed to be dying. The doctor brought him back to life with a large dose of castor oil. However, Yumbo was soon found dead. One of the admirers overdrank his cocoa.

In addition, four pigs lived on board the Wolf, a dozen and a half sheep, led by their leader named Julius, a whole herd of rabbits, flocks of chickens, ducks, pigeons, parrots and canaries. From each captured ship, all living creatures were taken to the Wolf. English sailors abandoned their property on doomed ships, but first of all they tried to save their furry or feathered pets.

Alas, when the Wolf returned to Germany, only rats and cockroaches remained on it. All the rest were either eaten or they themselves died, unable to withstand climate change.

## VII

When unloading the Hitachi Maru, it was not at all easy to choose those goods that would be worthy of being stored in the holds of the Wolf.

It just opened my eyes! Flax, linseed oil, cotton, tea, beans, cocoa, peas, wheat, potato, coconut, peanut and fish flour. There were so many sturgeons and lobsters that the crew of the Wolf enjoyed these delicacies for many weeks. Unfortunately, Hitachi Maru did not have the mayonnaise that was so necessary for lobsters. Of course, you could make mayonnaise yourself, but the chickens on board the Wolf were on strike and did not lay eggs.

In addition to food products, the holds of the Japanese cargo ship were filled with rubber, leather, copper and brass. Brass ingots were melted down from old Chinese coins, and whole pieces fell off from them during unloading ...

It was a shame, but the unloading of the Hitachi-Maruk had to be stopped after three weeks - the Wolf was already packed to capacity. Everything was filled with copper and brass ingots, including coal pits and living quarters. Even cellars with ammunition were used for storage. But still, a lot of wealth had to be flooded.

While the corsairs of Nerger, toiling like convicts, feverishly unloaded the Japanese steamer,

the Japanese cruiser Tsushima, stationed in Cape Town, began to look for the Hitachi Mara, which had mail for it. The cruiser conducted a search for the missing ship off the east coast of Africa, constantly calling it for communication, unaware that the Hitachi Maru had fallen into the wolf's mouth. Like lamentation for a lost lover, the call signs of the Tsushima cruiser sounded on the air: Hitachi-Mar, we can't hear you, answer ... Hitachi-Mar, answer the Tsushima cruiser ... Hitachi-Mar, answer ..."

The luck that accompanied the Wolf from the very beginning of his corsair raid was favorable to him even now. The cruiser Tsushima passed several times the place that Nerger used for his anchorage, waiting for new prey to no avail. "Tsushima" appeared there just three days after Nerger got tired of waiting, and he went to unload the "Hitachi Mara".

While unloading continued, the Wolfchen constantly rose into the air, conducting reconnaissance of the area in order to protect Nerger from unpleasant surprises. Wolfchen, tail number 841, was a seaplane of the latest design and had an exceptionally strong hull. True, once on board the cruiser,

The Wolfchen was crippled almost immediately. "Wolf" was just conducting training firing, and the shock wave from a volley of several guns crushed the upper ailerons of the "wolf cub". But it was nothing, the damage was fixed in less than a day. The greatest concern has always been the Wolfchen engine, which carried a double load in the tropics due to heat and high humidity. All metal parts instantly rusted. Therefore, both pilots and mechanics literally did not leave the Wolfchen, constantly lubricating, cleaning and patching it. Before entering the Indian Ocean, Wolfchen was hidden below deck. The hydroplane was used for the first time when the Tarritella was stopped. When the Wolfchen first took to the air, everyone looked at this spectacle with fear, not expecting anything good from him. "Wolfchen" looked very undignified. It looked like it was about to fall apart, which many predicted, urging the pilots not to risk it. "You can't start serious business with such a duck," the pessimists grumbled. At any airfield, after the assembly of the aircraft, a whole team of technicians and mechanics checks and reconciles everything on it for a long time before allowing the car to fly. On board the Wolf, such pre-flight preparation was completely impossible. Wings and a tail stabilizer were attached to the body of the aircraft - and you're done!

Despite the strong wind, the Wolfchen took off without incident. True, the hydroplane jumped over the waves for a long time, jumping into the air and again touching the water with the floats, but then it broke away from the surface of the sea and in twenty minutes reached a height of one thousand two hundred meters.

The pilots said that from a height a stunning view opens up. The ocean is visible for ninety miles around, and the smallest detail is clearly visible on its dark blue surface. "Wolfchen" gained a height of four thousand meters, from where it dived down with a corkscrew and a few minutes later was again on the deck.

"Wolfchen" was immediately interested in sharks. Once, as soon as his floats touched the water, a huge sharp fin sticking out of the water moved towards the plane. This shark, apparently, "reported" to its fellows about the discovery of prey, because in less than a quarter of an hour, a whole flock was already raging around.

Having successfully passed the tests, "Wolfchen", weather permitting, took off daily, moreover, twice: at dawn and in the afternoon, returning already at dusk. Thanks to aerial reconnaissance, the Jumna and Wordsworth were found. It was very easy for pilots to determine the ship's heading and calculate its speed relative to the aircraft from "the height of their position". Then the Wolf came into play, and the discovered steamer

the end was coming.

When, on the way to Australia, the auxiliary cruiser entered a strip of continuous rains and storms, the Wolfchen was again dismantled and hidden below deck.

During the first flight in the Pacific Ocean, the pilots, having already taken off, discovered a break in the electrical network of the car and a broken stretch. However, they decided to end the flight. The ocean rolled a large swell; as always, sharks darted around the ship. Having completed the reconnaissance flight, "Wolfchen" landed on the water, but suddenly stopped unexpectedly and began to nose-dive, that is, "nod off". It turned out that the bursting stretching damaged one of the floats, and he gave a leak. The car slowly stood on the motor, raising its tail.

Even during the takeoff of the Wolfchen from the bridge of the cruiser, they noticed that not everything was in order on the plane, and now they were seriously alarmed. A boat with selected rowers was immediately launched into the water.

A gusty wind carried the hooded "Wolfchen" away from the ship. The pilot and observer climbed out of the cockpit and climbed onto the tail of the vehicle in an attempt to balance the Wolfchen. Shark fins were already flashing around. Bending the oars, the sailors on the lifeboat went to the "Wolfchen" and managed at the very last moment. From the bridge, Nerger saw how two sailors, ignoring the sharks, jumped into the water and climbed onto the floats of the Wolfchen. Nerger slowly and carefully led the ship to the crash site.

Just as carefully, the hydroplane was taken aboard, disassembled and sent for overhaul. Sharks for a long time disappointedly circled around the "Wolf" ...

Three weeks later the plane's engine was completely overhauled. The broken "ribs" of the wings were replaced and a new canvas sheathing was stretched, about a month later the Wolfchen was ready to fly again.

During the campaign, "Wolfchen" made more than one hundred and fifty sorties, staying in the air for hours under the wind, rain and scorching sun. There were a lot of breakdowns on it, but they were all relatively quickly eliminated. For example, the new "stiffeners" for the wings were cut from a tea box. Almost every three days, new canvas or canvas skins had to be pulled over the wings and fuselage of the Wolfchen. There was a lot of this goodness on the Wolf, but of such quality that the skin soon spread again and hung in tatters, giving the Wolfchen a miserable look. It occurred to someone to put raw silk on the wings of the Wolfchen, but it spread out after two hours of flight, and it is simply amazing how the plane managed to return back and not fall into the sea. More durable material needed to be found, and this was also found on the Hitachi Maru, which was simply Ali Baba's cave! In one of the holds of a Japanese ship, boxes were found containing white satin, intended for ball gowns of English ladies. Thus, "Wolfchen" was "dressed" in an English ballroom toilet, and until the end of the campaign this toilet served him well ...

After unloading the Hitachi Maru, the Wolfchen flew out to reconnoitre the situation to make sure that the Japanese cruiser Tsushima was still nearby. Having received the news that there was no one in the nearby area, Nerger brought the Hitachi Maru into deep water, where he sank the "precious Japanese vessel."

It was urgent to replenish coal reserves before the situation became critical.

Nerger decided to go towards Durban.

The Wolf had been at sea for exactly a year, and luck was always on his side. Nerger believed that Luck would not leave Wolf even now. And I wasn't wrong.

One day at dawn - the best time for hunting - the signalmen of the Wolf found a large ship on the horizon, which turned out to be the Spanish steamer Igots Mendi. Already by the appearance of the Spanish steamer, it became clear that it was just overloaded with coal.

The ship was delayed, the prize crew landed on it and led the Igots Mendi after the Wolf. Interviewing the captain of the coal miner and his officers, Nerger was once again convinced of the strong pressure England was exerting on neutral shipping. The Igots Mendi left Spain in ballast to deliver a cargo of jute from Calcutta. The British had nothing against this. Against! They assured the Spanish captain that all "neutrals" could fully rely on the help and support of the British Empire. Only courtesy for courtesy. The Igots Mendi is to enter Delago Bay, pick up coal there and deliver it to Colombo. Of course, for the needs of the English fleet. If the Spaniards refuse to do this, then the British government may also prevent a Spanish ship from entering Calcutta for jute. Other difficulties may arise.

In case of consent, the Spaniards also had to accept the additional conditions set by the British: the way to Delago Bay was not paid, and the loading of coal by freight would be forty shillings per ton, which is more than ten times less than the real freight rate.

The Spaniards really needed jute. Therefore, the Igots Mendi received eight thousand tons of coal in Delago Bay, and when it went out to sea, it ran into the Wolf.

Nerger could only regret that he had not "caught" the Spaniard a few days earlier. Then it would be possible not to destroy the Hitachi-Marui, which we so wanted to bring to Germany.

But soon Nerger stopped regretting that he had not met "Igots Mendi" earlier. If this happened two or three days earlier, trouble would not have been avoided. The very next day, a fire broke out in one of Wolf's largest coal bunkers, which was barely a third full.

In fact, the ignition of coal in bunkers is common and not very scary when there is access to a fire. If they had met the "Spaniard" earlier, the bunker would have been filled to capacity, and then things would have been really bad: it would have had to be flooded, and then suffer with wet coal, as was the case when leaving Germany. Nerger singled out a special sailor whose duties included solely monitoring the temperature in the coal pits, which he measured several times during the day.

On November 9, the sailor reported to the chief engineer that the temperature in the main bunker had suddenly jumped five degrees. Almost immediately there was a smell of gas and smoke appeared. But in the almost empty bunker, the fire was immediately extinguished.

Nerger brought the Igots Mendi to his old parking lot. The reloading of coal was immediately started. After three days of continuous work, all the Wolf's coal pits were filled to capacity. Then all the women and children who were on the Wolf were transferred to the Spanish steamer, which was ordered to follow the Wolf. For this purpose, additional cabins were equipped on the "Spaniard", they were decorated with carpets and mirrors, washbasins and many others that the Germans managed to capture on sunken ships.

Among the women who went to the Spanish ship was the famous "Mary Steward", who, being a member of the ship's crew, was legally considered a prisoner. There was also not much room on the Spanish steamer, and she was placed in a cabin where a woman with a small child from the island of Mauritius was already settled. "Maria Steward" threw another scandal, saying that she was not going to live in the same cabin with the "colored", and it would be better to stay on the "Wolf", because she was not afraid of either guns or shells. Nerger was about to agree, but

then he changed his mind, believing that it would be better to get rid of the brawler.

In recent months, the number of prisoners aboard the Wolf had increased so much that they were a constant headache for Nerger. There were almost four hundred of them, who had to be placed somewhere and, importantly, fed. Among the prisoners were representatives of twenty-two different nationalities, not always getting along with each other. The longest on the Wolf was the crew of the Tarritella, led by their captain Meadow, a very interesting personality.

Captain Meadow, as they say, took root aboard the Wolf. Two of his subordinates - the senior navigator and the second engineer - escaped by jumping overboard one night, and apparently died. The captain himself, apparently, did not even think about it. Meadow was originally from Auckland, New Zealand and gave the impression of a calm, affable person. He was convinced that everything beautiful on earth is unshakably British, and about the rest he had no idea and was not interested. Nerger sometimes laughed outright when he was recounted the content of the conversations that Meadow had with his officers, who were unaccustomed to some of the nuances of British humor. The captain had already been on the Wolf for a year, when the following dialogue took place between him and the aircraft engineer in command of the Wolfchen mechanics:

Meadow (solemnly): "Good morning, Mr. Engineer!"

Engineer: "Good morning, mister captain!"

M: "Mr. engineer! Do you know that today marks exactly one year of my stay on board the Wolf? For a whole year I have been sailing on a German warship!"

And: "With what I heartily congratulate you, Mr. Captain! I am very happy for you and I am sure that today should be somehow specially noted."

M (solemnly, minting every word): "That's it, mister engineer. In this regard, I have a request to you. I would like you to convey word for word my wishes to the commander of the ship. But only word for word.

And: "Of course, Captain Meadow. What should I tell him?"

M: "Report to him that I have been on the Wolf for a year and participated in all his campaigns. For this I would like to receive the Iron Cross, preferably First Class. But, if this is not possible, then I will also accept a Second Class cross."

All this was said with such a serious air that it was quite impossible to determine whether Captain Meadow was joking or not.

As the Wolf was returning home, Captain Meadow appeared on deck with a bundle in his hand, where he said he had put all his belongings in order to have everything he needed when he was fished out of the water after the sinking of the Wolf. Otherwise, you will have to beg later, like a beggar, from the rescuers for a bar of soap or a razor. They tried to assure him that this would never happen, and soon he would go ashore, where he would rest from the hardships of ship life playing tennis or football. Shrugging his shoulders, Captain Meadow modestly remarked that the Wolf had been incredibly lucky so far, but now that the ship had already approached the line of the English blockade, it would certainly be covered, and everyone would have to swim. He even offered to wager twenty marks against a pair of boots on the occasion. There was no chance, he assured, the Wolf had too little speed to break through the blockade. Nobody accepted the British captain's bet, but when the Wolf reached Germany safely after some time, one of the officers asked him:

"Well, Captain Meadow, what do you say now? Did your vaunted British catch the slow-moving Wolf? Did you manage to spot at least one English ship? Have you seen what your advertised blockade is worth?

Meadow was confused. To all questions, he only nodded his head ruefully and remained silent. Once on shore, he immediately asked to get him a civilian hat or cap, since he no longer wanted to wear a British naval cap ...

The next group of prisoners got on the Wolf from the Jumna. Her captain, William Wickman, brought his entire extensive library with him to the Wolf. He was never seen without a book, he always seemed to be completely immersed in reading. Real life didn't interest him at all. Even as he dined, he only thought of getting back to his favorite books as soon as possible. Among the twenty-nine people of his crew were two antipodes: cook Alpin and a black Portuguese named Zilver. Alpin was a Scot and apparently the dirtiest Scot in the world. When he was offered to wash, he took it as a deadly insult. His inflexible stance led to the fact that soon his own comrades refused to sleep with Alpin in the same room. But, despite the blatant slovenliness and uncleanness, the cook was, in fact, a good fellow, to whom it was rarely necessary to apply any coercive measures. His complete opposite was the Portuguese Zilver - always clean and tidy, dressed to the nines, although he was a stoker by profession.

From the steamer Wordsworth, twenty more prisoners arrived on board the Wolf: English, Irish, Scots and one Japanese. The captain of the Wordsworth, John Shields, at first took the sinking of his ship as a personal affront and walked around with an angry expression all day. To all appeals to him from his comrades, unfortunately, the captain answered only with an irritated grunt. But gradually, Shields' mood began to improve, especially when he realized that the Germans were doing no better with other ships than with the Wordsworth. Gradually it even became clear that the captain of the Wordsworth had a great sense of humor, since he experienced the greatest joy when the Wolf sent his next victim to the bottom. At the same time, he laughed loudly, but not maliciously.

A very interesting person was the captain of the Deya sailing ship, old John Rugg. He suffered the loss of his ship very hard. Hunched over, the captain stood at the rails and looked at the sinking sailboat, taking off his hat, as if at the grave of a loved one, and wept. Rugg was the recognized patriarch of his sailors, mostly Negroes from Mauritius. With all questions, they turned only to him, and the captain himself never asked for anything for himself, but only for his team.

From the sunken Vairuna, Captain Harold Sanders and thirty-eight crew members were captured: English, Scots, Irish and Australians. From the sailing ship "Winslow" to the "Wolf" replenishment arrived in the form of Captain Trajt and his thirteen sailors, among whom were the British, Japanese and Negroes.

From the schooner "Beluga" Captain Cameron was taken with his wife and daughter Anita ("Ship Scourge") and thirteen sailors, all of them were Americans.

From the schooner Ankor, Captain Olsen, already quite an elderly man, and eleven members of the crew were captured - also only Americans. Among them stood out a steward - a great lover of cognac. Somehow he was asked to do some work on the Wolf, for which he asked for a glass of cognac. When asked how many stars he prefers, the steward replied:

- I am American. For me, the more stars, the better!

On the Matung were captured: Captain Donaldsen, Lieutenant Governor of Rabaul Strangman,

to whom a squalid cabin has been replaced by the luxury of his residence, Major Flood of the medical service with his wife, three captains of the English army, one officer of the Royal Navy (the military commandant of the steamer), nine Australian soldiers and the famous "Mary Steward".

The first prisoners could still be accommodated with all the amenities - there were plenty of rooms on the Wolf. But, as the number of prisoners increased, the conditions of their detention gradually deteriorated, and with the capture of the Hitachi Maru they became simply intolerable. In addition to Captain Tominaga and a hundred of his crew, there were also fifty-seven passengers on the ship, some with very strange habits.

One morning, Nerger was walking along the deck, considering a plan for further operations, and accidentally "looked at the Hitachi Maru standing next to the Wolf." On the deck of the captured ship, the commander of the Wolf saw several young people who made him wonder at the oddities of Japanese outfits. The young people were dressed in kimonos, which, swinging open when walking, exposed underwear, consisting of a red underskirt and stockings intercepted with colored ribbons, and elegant patent leather shoes with intricate buckles. Nerger did not believe his eyes and, having called his officers, asked if he was imagining all this, who were these people, to which he received the answer that such a fashion arose among young Englishmen serving in the colonies.

Many of these young men were going to join the English army, so they were taken prisoner at the right time. But apparently they did not yet fully realize their current situation, since they very often sang their famous war song: "Long way to Tipperary." German sailors laughed at them, twisting the words of the song: "Long way to Germany." Things almost came to a fight. The British did not want to admit even to themselves that their path lies not at all in Tipperary, but in German captivity. The officers responsible for the behavior of the prisoners turned to Nerger with a demand to ban the performance of this song. But Nerger waved it off. For what? Let them sing.

Among the British there was one young man who became a real victim of a naval war. When he left England for Ceylon, his ship was sunk in the Atlantic by a German submarine. The young man was rescued, and he continued his journey on the ship "Mongolia", which was blown up by German mines near Colombo itself. Saved once again, the Englishman decided to spit on everything and return home. So he tried to do so, but on the way back he was captured by the Wolf.

Among the prisoners was one rich businessman-planter, president of a large joint-stock company for the processing of sugar cane. Being captured had thwarted some big deal he was about to make. Wringing his hands, he begged Nerger to let him go, assuring that there were many Germans among the shareholders who would go bankrupt if the planned deal was not concluded. Nerger explained to the planter that in times of war one had to sacrifice the financial interests of one's compatriots. It's nothing you can do!

Of the elderly English, "King Edward" was very picturesque, so called because of his striking resemblance to the late English King Edward VII. It seemed that he was just the twin brother of the late king. He differed from his prototype in that he was an alcoholic. Without missing a glass or two of whiskey, he simply could not exist.

"Damned Huns!" he shouted at the German sailors. - Do you want to kill me?

The Huns poured him a glass (and more on good days), and "King Edward" calmed down.

The Wolf had one galley, and the cooks prepared the same food for everyone in the same pot. Of course, it was not at all easy to feed such a horde that gathered on the Wolf. No matter how the provisions were replenished, they melted much faster, swept away by almost a thousand mouths,

as if the Wolf was a battleship supplied from the shore depots of its own base. The lack of fresh provisions was especially acute at times. Then the whole ship switched to stew, rice, peas and beans. The rest of the fresh provisions were distributed among the sick. Nерger was most afraid of the appearance of scurvy and beriberi on the ship, and therefore was very happy when pods of special beans were found on the Hitachi Maru, which the Japanese considered the best remedy for these diseases. By the way, it was the Japanese who were the first to get sick on board with scurvy. They kept apart and ate mainly rice, not wanting to eat from the common cauldron. And only when the first signs of the disease appeared, the Japanese were persuaded to eat with everyone.

In the conditions in which the crew of the Wolf was located, something always threatened people's health. The crew was selected by a special medical commission, and most of the sailors steadfastly endured those overloads that fell to their lot. There were no complaints as they were all volunteers. Doctors did not so much treat as they were engaged in prevention. Even before the arrival of the Wolf in the Indian Ocean, everyone had been vaccinated against smallpox, and during the raid in the Pacific, both crew members and prisoners were given quinine as a prophylactic against malaria. When there was no fresh meat or vegetables, people received citric acid as a remedy for scurvy.

When typhus was brought from the Hitachi Maru to the Wolf, everyone was vaccinated without exception.

When the Wolf returned to the northern latitudes, Nерger ordered everyone on board to engage in water procedures, which was done until the first snow appeared.

Quarrels and squabbles often arose among the prisoners, especially between the British and the Japanese. Distrust, secret malice and hatred reigned in relations between representatives of the two great maritime powers, manifested at every opportunity. Sometimes all this took such forms that the Germans had to intervene. One morning, the Japanese, under the guidance of the helmsman from the Hitachi Maru, were cleaning the passenger deck. In general, the Japanese were disciplined, obedient and did everything at the slightest nod. While they were scrubbing the deck, a lanky Englishman appeared. He slowly walked past the Japanese and spat savoryly at their feet. Probably, all the sailors in the world, and even more so the British, know that spitting on the deck is a gross violation of age-old maritime traditions. The Japanese pretended not to notice anything, silently covered up the spit and continued their work. Only the helmsman gave the Englishman a very eloquent look.

In less than five minutes the Englishman reappeared. He slowly, sedately, with a mocking look, walked past the working Japanese, keeping his hands in his pockets. Then he stopped and, having measured the Japanese with a contemptuous glance, spat twice on the deck and was about to proceed further. In the next instant, the Japanese surrounded him, grabbed him and slammed him against the bulwark so that the Englishman came to his senses only after a few minutes and quickly retreated.

This happened not only at the level of sailors, but also among much more intelligent people. "Lord allies" hated each other so much that this hatred was literally in the air. For example, Medical Major Flood did not hide his views when it came to "Japanese allies." He said that he did not understand why the British government entrusted the protection of convoys en route from Australia to the Japanese fleet. Everywhere you go, there are only Japanese warships, which in this way control all of Australia's maritime trade. And the British left four light cruisers and several destroyers in the region. Australians even get the feeling that they are no longer a British dominion, but a Japanese mandate. The actions of the government are simply inexplicable! Apart from the fact that England, by such behavior, demonstrates her helplessness in protecting the security of overseas territories, Flood could not understand this for purely practical reasons. The Japanese are the least concerned about safety.



English territories or some other interests of Great Britain. They are using the present situation solely for the purpose of espionage, since no one doubts that in the future a war between Japan and England, including, of course, Australia, is a foregone conclusion.

Even during this war, there were skirmishes between the allies that threatened to escalate into an armed conflict. This was especially evident during the capture of German colonies in the South Pacific. The Anglo-Australian fleet approached the territories from one side, the Japanese fleet from the other. Whoever managed to land the marines first, the territory belonged to him. There were also shootings. There was no question of any agreed division of territories.

For example, shortly after the landing of the Anglo-Australian forces at Rabaul, several Japanese cruisers approached the harbor entrance. It is difficult to put into words the rage that seized the yellowskins when they learned that the British had outstripped them. Regardless of anything, the Japanese landed armed troops ashore. The British and Australians took appropriate measures, and things almost came to an armed clash.

The Japanese left only a few days later, when they managed to reach an agreement at the highest level.

However, Japanese cruisers darted around Rabaul almost until the end of the war, as if waiting for an opportunity to capture it.

Another similar story caused outrage in the entire Australian society. Two Japanese officers suddenly appeared at the British radiotelegraph station at Rabaul and demanded that they be given all the English and Australian operational ciphers. They were kicked out. The next night, the station nearly burned down. Communication between "allied" officers is reduced to the necessary minimum. No friendship and does not smell!

Dr. Flood often complained to Nerger about the perfidy of the Japanese and the myopia of the British government. Nerger, in turn, made sure that Anglo-Japanese relations did not lead to a serious conflict aboard the Wolf. It was necessary to follow carefully, since many German sailors sincerely wished that the "allies" would fight among themselves.

From all this, Nerger concluded that life is a very strange thing ...

## VIII

By laying a minefield near Singapore, all the tasks assigned to the Wolf were completed, and it was time to think about returning to Germany. However, Nerger saw no reason to miss out on any "fat chunks" that might be caught on the long return journey. Against! The longer the raid dragged on, the more appetite was played out by the Wolf commander.

The Wolf and the Spanish collier Igots Mendi, who supplied the Germans with coal previously intended for the needs of the British fleet in Colombo, sailed separately. They met periodically at designated locations where the Wolf replenished its coal reserves.

The auxiliary cruiser was now operating on the usually very busy shipping route between Durban and Australia, but, much to Nerger's surprise, for many days

tedious waiting, they did not meet a single ship. It seemed that shipping on this line had ceased altogether.

"Wolf" began to descend south to the Cape of Good Hope, where he was met by a violent storm. At dawn the next day, when the first rays of the sun painted the eastern horizon, the signalmen of the Wolf found a barque sailing under storm sails. Despite the steep wave, the sailboat was delayed and a prize crew was sent to it. The sailboat turned out to be the American barque John N. Kirby. It was commanded by Captain Edward Bloom, who had a team of eighteen men, all Americans. A huge supply of food, soap and toiletries was found on the barge, as well as two hundred and seventy cars.

All cargo "John Kirby" was supposed to deliver to the ports of Elizabeth and Nathan. Nерger noticed that the barque was much east of the desired course. The reason turned out to be very simple: leaving New York, the sailboat damaged the only chronometer on board, and in the future the longitude was determined by the commander's pocket watch. Therefore, Captain Blum did not dare to approach the shore until the weather was fine.

The two hundred and seventy vehicles in the holds of the John Kirby were to play an important role in the British announced offensive against the last German colonies in Africa. So the British were out of luck again.

Unfortunately, with such a strong pitching, there was nothing to think about unloading an American sailing ship at sea, and it was sunk the next day. Of course, there was a temptation to load at least a few brand new English cars onto the Wolf, and then proudly drive them around Kiel, Hamburg and Wilhelmshaven, but I had to, reluctantly, send them to the bottom near the Agulla Bank. It would be better if Neptune and his courtiers get a festive departure than the British use them in military operations against the German colonies.

The meeting with "John Kirby" took place on November 30 - on the anniversary of the release of "Wolf" in his military campaign.

Further, the Wolf's path went north, across the South Atlantic to the American coast. After two fruitless weeks, Wolf's signalers found a rather large sailboat heading on a collision course. The sailboat was very beautiful, especially when the rising sun painted its sails in a soft pink color. He did not seem to swim, but glided through the water like a swan. "Wolf" pursued the sailboat throughout the night. Nерger decided to capture it at dawn the next day - December 15th. The handsome sailing ship turned out to be the French schooner Marshal Davout, which was under the command of Captain Louis Bret with a cargo of grain from Australia to Dakar.

The sailboat did not obey the signals and drifted only after a warning shot. The French did not try to defend themselves, although they had two rapid-fire 90-mm cannons on board. They also did not have time to use the radio station. This happened, however, not because of fear of the Germans, but because of the incompetence of the radiotelegraph operator, who was seventeen years old, and he knew absolutely nothing about his business. Later, already in captivity, the French said that they did not manage to catch a single radio message during the entire flight. To service the guns on board the "Marshal Davout" were the gunners of the French navy. Although they tried to dispute this fact, they forgot to destroy the photos in which they showed off in the military uniform of the French Navy, which exposed them.

Barrels of excellent French wine were found in the holds of the Marshal Davout, which made the sailors of the Wolf very happy, since their stocks of alcohol were coming to an end. A

a glass of good wine was the best remedy for scurvy and beriberi. Plus, Christmas was coming up. So, French wine came in very handy. Several centners of potatoes, a live pig and a flock of carrier pigeons were also loaded onto the Wolf.

Then "Wolf" and "Marshal Davout" dispersed. The French sailboat went to the bottom, and the Wolf continued its journey to the west. On December 20, the Wolf met at the agreed rendezvous point with the Spanish coal miner Igots Mendi. The rendezvous was east of Trinidad, where Nerger hoped to resupply coal and check out the vehicles before the last leg of the journey back to Germany. The Spanish coal miner also needed to clean the boilers. In addition, all the supplies of water and provisions were so depleted at Igots Mendi that Nerger decided to transfer part of his to him.

The "Spaniard" was informed of Nerger's intentions by signal, and the "Wolfchen" was sent to look for an uninhabited island somewhere nearby. For some reason, Trinidad was considered uninhabited on the Wolf, and they would probably have gone straight to it if luck, whose darling was the Wolf, had not taken care of its pet this time too.

Before Nerger began to carry out the planned measures, the radio operators of the Wolf received a radiogram in Portuguese in which a certain Admiral Adelino Martinez notified a certain Fernando Nerongo in Trinidad that, from today, the admiral was acting as Chief of Staff of the Brazilian Navy. At the same time, Fernando Nerongo was called the "military commander of Trinidad." Consequently, the island was not only not uninhabited, but a military base was deployed on it with a powerful radio transmitter, a garrison, and possibly patrol warships.

Realizing his mistake, Nerger immediately ordered to turn south. He did not want to be caught after a year-long successful raid, and the commander of the Wolf thanked God for the timely intercepted Brazilian radio message.

Nerger decided to carry out the planned loading of coal and repairs on the open sea, at the southern border of the southeast trade wind that reigned there. However, everything turned out to be far from being as simple as it seemed to Nerger. The swell was so large that it was not possible to moor with a lag to the Igots Mendi. They wanted to carry out part of the work with the help of boats, but there was very little sense from this.

Meanwhile, the second Christmas came up, which the sailors of the Wolf had to celebrate on the high seas. Again, Christmas trees were built from various improvised means. Now there were even more of them, because the prisoners also celebrated Christmas. Almond cakes were made from coconut flour, the second issue of a humorous wall newspaper was published, etc. They sang songs, raised toasts, and, despite the fatigue of the crew, everyone was in a good mood. But the sailors now had only one strong desire - to get home as soon as possible. On the festive table, the potato harvested from the French sailboat aroused everyone's joy. Salmon and lobsters from Hitachi-Maru have long become boring, turning into everyday food.

On December 25, the sea became calmer, and the Wolf managed to approach the Spaniard and begin loading coal. The Igots Mendi, whose holds were already almost empty, climbed high out of the water and continued to sway strongly. Despite the exposed fenders, the ships were hit hard by the sides.

On the Wolf, the side keel was damaged, and many small holes and cracks formed in the underwater part of the hull, through which water began to flow. The Spanish steamer also developed a leak. But, despite all this, 550 tons of coal were loaded onto the Wolf in a day. The vast experience acquired in the endless coal loadings was already having an effect.

It was no less difficult to unmoor from the Spaniard than to moor to him. The Wolf and its collier were thrown from side to side, Nerger could not even sit on a chair in his cabin, and those who were not on duty were thrown out of their beds. The Igots Mendy, in turn, banked so that it hit the Wolf's superstructure, severely damaging the bridge. In addition, the Spanish steamer already had a noticeable roll to starboard.

Simultaneously with the loading of coal on the Wolf, repairs were carried out on machines and boilers. Mechanics and machinists built hydraulic jacks, adjusted the pumps of the refrigeration plant, changed more than a thousand rivets on the boilers, fixed and checked the steam heating system, which had not been used before. Now it was time to continue heading north.

Quietly and imperceptibly, the year 1917 went down in history. A new year, 1918, began with a faded glow in the east. The Wolf had been on the high seas for thirteen months.

On January 4th, in the northeast, Wolf's signalmen found a sailboat heading west. "Wolf" immediately moved to intercept, but, to the great disappointment of all, the ship turned out to be neutral.

On the stern, the Norwegian name "Storo Bore" was clearly read. In addition, everything indicated that the sailboat was sailing in ballast. But, nevertheless, I would like to know where and where it comes from.

Nerger ordered the raising of the English merchant flag. The Storo Bore could not today but tomorrow meet the English ships and inform them that they had seen a German auxiliary cruiser. Nerger had no doubt that he would do just that. Then a whole pack of wolfhounds would follow the Wolf's trail.

Raising the English flag, the Wolf asked the Norwegian where he was going. The Storo Bore replied that it was following from Beira to Montevideo.

There was nothing to do. It only remained to wish the Norwegian barque a happy voyage.

A few hours later, when the masts of the Norwegian were still visible from the "crow's nest" on the Wolf's mast, Nerger, delving into various Lloyd's reference books, made an interesting discovery. It turns out that the Storo Bore was not a Norwegian ship at all, but an English one! He changed the flag (without any right to do so) only during the war, in order to avoid all its vicissitudes, hiding behind a neutral flag, thereby fooling the stupid and naive German sailors. Nerger ordered to lay down on the reverse course, and before dark he caught up with the sailboat.

An examination of the ship's documents showed that all of Nerger's conclusions were correct. Through the commander of the prize team, Nerger conveyed his apologies to the captain of the sailing ship: he wished him a happy voyage, and now he is being delayed. The captain of the Storo Bore, apparently, guessed what was the matter, since he did not confirm his "neutrality", and therefore was not particularly indignant and protested. In addition, the Wolf's 150-millimeter guns possessed tremendous persuasion power - the captain and his crew moved to the Wolf, and the Storo Bore bark went to the seabed after their comrades in misfortune.

Continuing its journey to the north, "Wolf" again met with "Igots Mendy" in the equator region. Working in approximately the same conditions as the day before, 500 tons of coal were loaded from the "Spaniard" to the "Wolf" per day. Again mercilessly chatted, new damage was received, although the old ones had not yet been properly repaired.

Coal was still being transshipped when Wolf's radio operators received a radio message announcing the expansion of the German submarines' area of operation and the exact boundaries of this zone.

Now Nerger knew where he should not meddle, so as not to inadvertently get a German torpedo on board for all his exploits, which, of course, did not smile at all on him. At the same time, Nerger remembered the unfortunate Englishman from the "Mongolia". One more torpedoing, his nerves probably won't survive...

As we moved north, the heat subsided, the scorching tropical sun was left far behind, the weather constantly deteriorated, and, starting from the thirtieth degree of northern latitude, it became simply a nightmare. The strong wind turned into a storm, and that into a hurricane that raged for exactly two weeks. The force of the wind, which was eight to ten points, on January 27 reached twelve points. This went on for about a day, and then a hurricane began. Such thunder and roar fell from the sky, as if the day of the Last Judgment had come.

Twenty-meter waves surrounded the Wolf from all sides, threatening to crush the ship with their supernatural power and bury it under their monstrous mass. But the enraged element "Wolf" demonstrated its excellent seaworthiness. With his nose down, he slid down the crest of a gigantic wave, and then climbed up, desperately working the machine and hoping that the hurricane usually does not last long. But the hurricane not only did not weaken, but raged more and more. Because of the low-flying black clouds, it became dark as night. Nobody could close their eyes. Raging ghosts rushed in a terrible round dance around the ship, with thunder and a terrible hiss rushing down on its deck and superstructures, and, like waterfalls, falling back into the sea. It was especially bad for those prisoners who were not sailors, but simply passengers on sunken ships. And the sailors had a hard time. Many later admitted that during this hurricane they remembered all the forgotten prayers.

No one could tell how long this hurricane lasted: hours, days, weeks? It seemed to go on forever and never end. Finally, it swept somewhere to the southeast, giving those on the bridge of the Wolf the opportunity to see again the watery desert stretching around them, immersed in deep darkness. The sea was still seething and seething, the waves continued to fall on the Wolf, the spars groaned, the tackle creaked, but it was already just a storm, not a hurricane.

The element began to subdue its fury. However, before Nerger had time to breathe a sigh of relief on this occasion, the bridge received a report from the senior engineer about the failure of the pumps pumping water out of the holds. Nerger, by his own admission, did not receive a more terrible message during the entire raid. Basically, it was the end. The hole received during the reloading of coal from the Igotsa Mendi increased even more from the impact of storm waves on the sides of the Wolf and the terrible vibration that the ship's hull was subjected to from the elements and the operation of its own machines in the limit mode in an unprecedented hurricane. Water rushed into the hole, whose flow was estimated at least forty tons per hour. The reports of the bilge mechanic took on an increasingly ominous tone, with every hour the situation became more serious, and finally, water broke into the bow coal bunker, flooded the pump room, clogging the pistons of the drainage pumps, which stopped pumping water.

Everything seemed to be over now. But the bilge engineers, throwing themselves into the icy water and working waist-deep in it, began to strengthen the doors and bulkheads in the pump room to prevent water from entering there. The sailors worked in such a way that, despite the cold piercing to the bones, sweat dripped from them in streams. It's good that they were wearing high rubber boots, obtained on one of the American sailing ships. At some point, the lights went out in the compartments, but even in complete darkness there was a heavy rumble of sledgehammers and crowbars on the wooden beams securing the bulkheads.

The ocean continued to rage and roar, and the Wolf continued to grind and groan under the blows of powerful waves. By the titanic efforts of the bilge machinists it was possible to restart one

from the pumps, then another. Pumping water resumed, the ship was saved!

## IX

The storm subsided slightly, but did not stop. The storm continued. The cyclone, moving from the coast of North America towards Ireland, seemed to be personally chasing the Wolf. Constantly circling over the ship, he fell on the "Wolf" from the bow, then from the stern, then threw the ship on board, clearly experiencing some kind of mystical attachment to the auxiliary cruiser. Torrential squalls with hail alternated alternately, then snow charges, and even snowstorms. Having weaned from the cold in tropical waters for a year, the sailors of the Wolf tried to keep warm by any means. The best way was the most ancient - a glass of strong vodka inside. A snowstorm, a piercing icy wind and a ferocious storm seemed to want to take revenge on the tropical heat that had exhausted the sailors for such a long time. During snowstorms, those standing on the bridge of the Wolf did not even see their own hands. Snow blinded my eyes, visibility dropped to zero. Enormous flakes, at least half a foot in diameter, danced wildly around.

It was dank in the lower rooms, the bulkheads in the cabins were frosty. People slept dressed.

The number of signalers had to be doubled on the bridge. For any auxiliary cruiser, the main rule for survival was to find the enemy first. Before he notices. The Wolf sailed through very dangerous waters, where, according to all reports, the sea was teeming with English patrol ships and patrol cruisers. But the strange thing: the ocean was completely empty. During all this time, the Wolf's signalmen found only a neutral sailing ship sailing in ballast somewhere to the south, and a couple of steamships, apparently leaving the English Channel and heading west - to the shores of America. In these waters, ships usually met almost every hour, and smoke was always observed on the horizon. Now there was nothing. Perhaps this was the result of unrestricted submarine warfare declared by Germany. In any case, Nerger wanted to believe it.

Although England emphatically denied that her shipping was in any way impeded by the actions of the enemy, these explanations were apparently intended only for neutral countries, and the reality spoke for itself. The seas around Britain, usually swarming with warships and merchant ships rushing from all parts of the world to the ports of the Great Maritime Empire, were now empty. Only now Nerger understood why all the ships going to England and intercepted by him were mostly stuffed with food. There is a famine in England! This was inevitable for a country completely dependent on shipping by sea. It was hunger that was the goal of the English blockade, in the grip of which Britain had kept Germany for the fourth year. Now she had to taste all the fruits of the counter-blockade carried out by the German fleet. Before entering the Icelandic Strait, the "Wolf" once again met with the "Igots Mendy". The almost completely unloaded steamer swayed strongly on the waves. Nerger asked the captain how things were on board.

"Tolerably," he replied. - Strongly shakes, but tolerable.

The captain of the Spanish steamer also reported an interesting meeting in the North Atlantic with two English large auxiliary cruisers. The weather was foggy and overcast. The captain was afraid that he might be detained, since the English ships were accompanied by a destroyer. But he soon realized that there was no destroyer with them. The destroyer was simply painted on board one of the larger ships. It was something new in the arsenal

military tricks of the British. Nerger could not understand what, in fact, the British wanted to achieve with this? Is it possible that in such an original way they scared away German submarines from large ships?

On the Igoce Mendy, demolition charges were ready to explode in case the British really wanted to stop the steamer. True, the first mate, frightened, wanted to neutralize them and hand over the ship to the British, but was exposed and put under arrest in his own cabin.

Another problem for the Spanish steamer was the cold. There was no heating system, as on the Wolf. The women transplanted to him sewed warm linen from the captured flannel for the team and prisoners, but this was clearly not enough.

All surplus warm clothes, as well as electric heaters found in large quantities on the Hitachi Maru, were transferred from Wolf to Igots Mendi. In addition, the commander of the prize team equipped a room in the hold of Igots Mendi, where he brought steam heating from the boiler room. Both the crew and the prisoners could warm themselves in this room. Having taken the last tons of coal from the Igots Mendi, the Wolf went further north. It was getting colder, and everyone free from service was in heated rooms.

Luck accompanied the Wolf so much throughout his entire campaign that none of his crew doubted the successful outcome of their adventure. Everyone was sure that they would return home safe and sound. And yet, on the last leg of the journey, the sailors were seized by some kind of tension, although Nerger believed that it was rather not tension, but impatience to see their native shores on the horizon as soon as possible.

No one, except for the captured British, even thought that British patrol ships could intercept the Wolf on their way to the German coast. The prisoners were convinced that the Wolf would be intercepted and destroyed, in all seriousness preparing for a meeting with their compatriots. However, none of them were especially sad, except for the captain of the Hitachi-Mar, Tominaga. His stubbornness cost the lives of twenty sailors. He himself did not dare to commit suicide, and therefore completely withdrew into himself, shunned any society, tormented by remorse. Tominaga once asked the French captain Bre, on whose sailing ship the Marshal Davout had two rapid-fire guns, why he surrendered without defending himself. Shrugging his shoulders, the Frenchman replied that one way or another, the case would have ended in the death of his ship, but people would also have died. Its 90-millimeter guns were only good enough to drive off submarines, not to fight auxiliary cruisers, especially those as heavily armed as the Wolf. Bre stated that under such conditions, he could not put the lives of so many people at stake.

This finished off the unfortunate Tominaga. One day he disappeared, and the news quickly spread throughout the ship: "Captain Tominaga is missing!"

At first they thought that the Japanese hid in some lower rooms. Some even expressed fear that Tominaga had gone mad and might blow up the Wolf. The entire ship was searched, as they say, from the bottom to the cloak - the Japanese captain was nowhere to be found. They even searched the battle cellars and chain boxes, interrogated the prisoners. In vain. Tominaga seemed to have vanished into thin air.

Only later, one of the sailors of the Hitachi-Mar said that he saw how his captain stood for a long time at the bulwark, looking into the dark water, where twenty of his sailors found peace, and then threw himself overboard. Then the same sailor was found to have a suicide note from Captain Tominaga, in which he explained that his soul could not find peace until it was reunited with the souls of his dead sailors. He was obliged to commit suicide immediately after being captured

"Hitachi-Maru", but became cowardly and did not comply with the main maritime law of his country: only death can separate the captain from his ship. The captain apologized to his crew for delaying his last duty for so long. He bequeathed his things to the team ...

And the "Wolf", breaking the ice floes with a crash with a stem, came closer and closer to his native shores, not meeting decisively anyone along the way.

The North Sea, despite its well-known treachery, seemed so dear and close that its half-forgotten greenish waters were greeted with joyful cries of "Hurrah". The native sea received the sailors of the "Wolf" fiercely. But even in the storm and the noise of the waves, something familiar was already felt. This was especially acute after almost a year and a half of a military raid on alien, distant and hostile seas.

But the sailors of the "Wolf" were still waiting for a painful test. Already in sight of their native shores, they were cruising at the entrance to the port, waiting for the approach of the Igotsa Mendi. The signalers eagerly peered at the horizon - when will the smoke of their prize ship finally appear?

"But everything passes," as the wise King Solomon used to say. These painful days passed, and the Wolf resolutely headed for the line of German minefields.

"Identify yourself!" - Powerfully flashed a gray guard, standing at the entrance to the swept fairway.

Auxiliary cruiser Wolf. The commander is the captain of the first rank Nerger.

The watchman was silent for a long time, then signaled: "Please repeat the identification."

"Wolf"? Nerger? The guard ship approached slowly. Distrustful looks.

"You are alive? Didn't die? Is that Wolf? Can't be!"

The watchman made a circle around the auxiliary cruiser, wanting to inspect it from all sides. In his every movement, wariness and distrust still showed through. Approaching the "Wolf" from the stern, they shouted from the guard:

How do sailors greet each other?

— Hummel! Hummel! (Bumblebee!) - yelled from the deck of the "Wolf", and they were answered by the joyful "cheers" of the sailors of the patrol ship.

Following the guard, "Wolf" entered Wilhelmshaven.

The ship spent four hundred and fifty-one days in the raid, passing sixty-four thousand miles.

During this time, the auxiliary cruiser Wolf destroyed twenty-seven enemy ships with a total displacement of 112,000 tons.

I must say that for all the events of the Great War in Germany, the Wolf was almost forgotten.

The command had no connection with the auxiliary cruiser and could not say anything to the relatives of the officers and sailors of the ship, who stormed the offices of officials of the Maritime Department, wanting to know something about the fate of their relatives.

At one time, a stubborn rumor went around Kiel and Bremen that the Wolf had died. The command, having no data, refused to confirm the fact of the death of the ship. Then another passed



rumor - the command of the fleet hides the death of an auxiliary cruiser.

Fleet Headquarters hoped that the Wolf, if she returned at all, would use the long, dark nights of late autumn or early winter to do so. But when the moonless nights of late January and early February passed, and the Wolf was still not there, the command began to gradually prepare the crew's relatives for the worst. Therefore, the appearance of "Wolf" was so unexpected.

The first to board the Wolf was the commander of the High Seas Fleet, Admiral Scheer, who congratulated the crew of the auxiliary cruiser on the successful completion of such a successful raid, awarding all officers and sailors with the signs of the Order of the Iron Cross.

Then Admiral Hipper held a review of the Wolf, after which the entire crew went to Berlin, where the officers of the Wolf were received by the Kaiser.

Nerger was awarded the highest order for military valor - the cross "Pour Le Merit".

On March 19, 1918, Berlin welcomed the sailors of the Wolf.

Under the escort of units of the Imperial Guard, the crew of the Wolf, led by Nerger, parade marched along Unter der Linden from the Brandenburg Gate to the Kaiser's Palace, where the Kaiser, the Empress and the Crown Prince took the parade on the steps of the main entrance.

The crew was released on a month's vacation, because the war was still going on, no longer promising Germany anything good.

Going on vacation, the officers and sailors of the "Wolf" understood that they would not return to their auxiliary cruiser.

Their raid became a bright page in the history of military privateering. For a coal ship to last four hundred and fifty-one days on the high seas and travel sixty-four thousand miles without calling at any port, that is, one and a half times around the world, was an outstanding achievement.

This achievement will forever remain in the annals of naval art as the clearest example of what a magical fusion of luck, perseverance, professional skill and self-confidence can lead to.

## EPILOGUE

In May 1918, the Wolf, with a different crew, was transferred to the Baltic, where it served until the end of the war as a transport and auxiliary mine layer.

The ship survived the "Baltic Triumph" of the Kaiser Fleet, participated in the occupation of Russian naval bases in Helsingfors and Revel, and helped pull the battleship Rhineland from the stones.

The Wolf also came to Petrograd, taking on board former German prisoners of war who no longer wanted to participate in the nightmarish Russian revolution.

After the war, "Wolf" was transferred to France, disarmed and renamed "Antinous".

The ship served under the French flag until 1931, after which it was decommissioned and sold in Italy for scrap.

The fate of Nerger to some extent resembled the fate of his ship.

Having surrendered command of the Wolf in May 1918, Nerger was appointed commander of a mine-sweeping flotilla, holding his pennant first on the light cruiser Stettin, which he once commanded, and then on the cruiser Kolberg.

At the very end of the war, the former commander of the Wolf was appointed chief of staff of the German Baltic Fleet, which gave him the right to the rank of Rear Admiral.

But in July 1919, Captain First Rank Nerger, to the surprise of many who knew him, resigned and left Germany.

Like every successful pirate, there were many legends and rumors about Nerger.

Particularly stubborn was the usual rumor among corsair captains about the innumerable treasures obtained by Nerger from captured ships and buried on some nameless atolls of the Pacific or Indian Oceans.

Unlike the old days, during the First World War, all prize money was supposed to be handed over to the treasury without any "marque" and other interest.

Times were different, and Nerger reported to the commissariat of the fleet, in his own words, to the last pfennig.

Everything removed from the captured ships was entered in the statements, under which were the signatures of Nerger himself, his senior officer and auditor. And everything was handed over to the treasury in full accordance with the unshakable rules of German accounting. Something in the end did not agree, or did not quite agree, and the former commander of the Wolf contributed two thousand seven hundred marks to the treasury.

Nevertheless, rumors about the untold riches hidden by Nerger somewhere on the nameless atolls of the southern seas continued to circulate stubbornly, and when Nerger unexpectedly resigned and left Germany, many were convinced that the former commander of the Wolf had gone to dig up his treasures.

However, there was also a more prosaic rumor that had quite good reasons.

Nerger hastily left the service and Germany, since he was included by the British in the list of suspected war criminals to be extradited for trial.

After the First World War, such lists did exist, but, as far as is known, no one was issued and not a single trial took place.

However, the persons on these lists considered it good to "disappear" temporarily, leaving the country. In particular, this was exactly what Hermann Goering did, who left for Sweden and worked there as a civil aviation pilot.

But Nerger was absent from Germany much longer than Goering, returning in 1928, when they had already forgotten about any trials of war criminals. He settled in his native Rostock and worked at the port in a position that can roughly be compared to that of a mentor captain, having made several voyages as such to the United States, Latin America and even Australia.

Arriving in Melbourne, Nerger notifies the shipping company of his dismissal,

briefly appears in Wellington, and then disappears again.

In 1932 he was met in San Francisco, and at the end of 1933 he returned to Germany aboard the Hamburg-American line "New York" and settled in the suburbs of Rostock.

After the Nazis came to power, Nerger, like all famous veterans of the First World War, is surrounded by increased attention of the state, he is assigned a special pension, and the name of the brave captain is used by propaganda in the revival of the German fleet and in the education of the younger generation.

Totalitarian regimes cannot live without numerous veteran organizations and apologetics for "veterans".

In August 1939, on the very eve of World War II, Germany celebrates the 25th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I. On the occasion of this anniversary, by a special decree of Hitler, all sailors - veterans of the last war, now retired, are promoted to the next rank.

And Nerger becomes Rear Admiral.

And yet, the Gestapo is constantly hovering around the old sailor, although Nerger, it would seem, did not give them the slightest reason for this.

He is interrogated three times in Rostock, and once even summoned to Prince Albertstrasse - to the Imperial Security Headquarters.

The Nazis check the rumors about the countless treasures of Captain Nerger - after all, the Third Reich is in desperate need of money and has already fallen into the financial abyss, where the collapse predicted back in the thirties awaits it.

Nerger was honored with a conversation by Schellenberg himself - the head of the famous Sixth Directorate of the RSHA - SD - external SS intelligence.

Interviewed with Nerger and Admiral Canaris. Apparently, someone hoped that the two famous sailors would understand each other better.

It is not known whether or not Nerger gave the "secret" of his treasure to the Nazis, if any, but it is well known that when Rostock was occupied by the Red Army in 1945, Nerger was immediately arrested and sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Oranienburg, surrendered by the SS in full order to the employees of the NKVD.

The Bolsheviks, as is well known, were the best treasure hunters and grave diggers in the world, and if people like Nerger fell into their hands, then they had no chance of escaping alive, even "voluntarily surrendering valuables."

At the beginning, the seventy-year-old Nerger was exhorted to "voluntarily surrender the treasure and not burden his guilt before the people." Nerger denied everything, trying to convince the Chekists that the rumors about his treasure had no basis. Such denial led to the fact that the patience of the NKVD workers burst, and the old sailor began to be beaten during interrogations, and in parallel to "sew" him a new case - he was a Gestapo agent.

On January 12, 1947, the former commander of the auxiliary cruiser Wolf, retired Rear Admiral Karl-August Nerger, according to official data, died in the Soviet concentration camp Sachsenhausen from acute heart failure.

According to another version, he was beaten to death during interrogation.

According to the third version - shot.

The capricious fate that was so merciful to Nerger during the First World War, having carried him safe and sound across three oceans on a slow-moving auxiliary cruiser, did this only in order to send the famous corsair to die in the Stalinist Gulag. Fate plays man...

...

Tactical and technical data of the auxiliary cruiser "Wolf"

Former bulk carrier "Wachtfels", built in 1913 in Flensburg for the Hansa shipping company.

On May 16, 1916, she was transferred to the Navy for conversion to an auxiliary cruiser and renamed Wolf.

Displacement: 5809 tons

Carrying capacity: 11200 brt.

Main dimensions: 135 x 7.1 x 7.9 m (Fully loaded).

Maximum speed: 10.5 knots (Triple expansion steam engine, three boilers, 2800 hp, one propeller).

Cruising range: 42,000 miles at a speed of 9 knots.

Armament: seven 150 mm / 40 guns, four 500 mm surface torpedo tubes, 465 mines, one ZZE-type airborne seaplane.

Crew: 347 people.

## THE LAST SAILING RADER

### THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF COUNT FELIX VON LUCKNER, COMMANDER OF THE AUXILIARY CRUISER SEEDLER

I

Lieutenant Commander Felix Luckner came from an old county family, but when he reminded of this in the wardroom of the battleship Kronprinz, where he served as a watch officer, his colleagues hid smiles - so little Luckner looked like an aristocrat. Rough habits and far from aristocratic speech made Count von Luckner more like some salty skipper of a fishing schooner. This strange officer was made so by his adventurous life, which passed away from the aristocratic salons, to stay in which the count, it would seem, had a birthright.

Felix Luckner was born on July 9, 1881 in Dresden. From childhood, he amazed his parents with a complete unwillingness to learn anything. In the third grade of the gymnasium, young Felix

sat for three years in a row. His father, a man of strong temper and by no means angelic patience, tried to instill in Felix a love of learning with the help of rods and slaps in the face, that is, according to all the rules of Prussian education, sung by Frederick the Great. But nothing helped.

The kindest grandmother of Felix, who did not approve of the methods of a rude father, tried to influence her grandson with kindness and even promised to pay him fifty pfennigs for every good mark at school. Count Luckner Sr. did not believe in such methods at all.

"You will spoil this dunce even more," he assured his grandmother, but decided to see what would come of her pedagogical experiments.

Inspired by the promises of money, young Felix diligently took up his studies, but, despite all his efforts, continued to be the most hopeless loser. However, my grandmother was sure that diligence would certainly give its results, and she was right. Felix soon got four good grades at school for the first time and earned two marks. True, the next day Felix again received two deuces, but his grandmother did not deduct money from him.

Felix was not particularly greedy for money, but he quickly realized that if his grandmother would pay him fifty pfennigs for every good mark, based only on his words, then he would soon fulfill his cherished dream - to acquire a pair of rabbits. Therefore, the grandmother soon learned that her beloved grandson had become the "first student" in the class. It cost the old countess seven marks, with which Felix bought the rabbits. Such happiness could have continued indefinitely if the grandmother had not accidentally met Felix's class teacher on the street, from whom she learned that her grandson, as he was a loser and the last student in the class, remained so.

It was a hard blow.

The grandmother sobbed, and the father, not without pleasure, remarked that "from such a scoundrel" as his son, nothing good would ever come of it.

When young Felix could not overcome the third grade of the gymnasium even from the third run, he was expelled, advising his parents to hire a tutor.

It was already too much, and young Felix, following the experience of the heroes of the few books he read, decided to run away from home and become a sailor.

However, the boy had the most vague idea of marine life, but, as he later explained, at home and at the gymnasium he was so fed up that he could only run away to the sea, since there were no prospects on land, except for sitting for the fourth year in the third grade, there were no more .

By the way, Felix also did not like to read, and the only heroes of sea adventures that he more or less knew about were Odysseus and Sinbad the Sailor. The first was told in the gymnasium, since it was considered classical, and the second was read to him by his grandmother before bedtime as a child. The craving for the sea was also stimulated by the menu of the first-class restaurant of the passenger liner Fürst Bismarck, which somehow fell into the hands of Felix and put aside in his memory the fact that the ships serve delicious food.

Taking advantage of the absence of his parents, who had gone to Italy for the summer, Felix decided to carry out his plan. He had only eighty marks, forty more Felix grabbed from his brother's piggy bank, convincing himself that he was taking on a loan, which he would definitely repay in due course. Having collected a chest with the necessary belongings, taking a revolver, a dagger and his father's smoking pipe, he got to the station and bought himself a ticket to the IV class carriage of the Dresden-Hamburg train.

In Hamburg, right at the train station, Felix saw an advertisement for the Concordia lodging house, which provided beds to guests for 50-75 pfennigs a day. That's where he went. Having settled into a rooming house, the young adventurer found out that in order to get hired on a ship, you first need to agree on employment in one of the numerous ship offices, of which there were at least a dime a dozen in Hamburg.

However, the adventurer was immediately disappointed. It turns out that minors, in order to be hired on a ship, needed the permission of their parents, as well as an identity document. Along the way, it turned out that a much larger amount of money was required to equip the sailor leaving for the voyage than the one that Felix took from home.

Then the young count had the idea to illegally get on one of the ships that were in the harbor. True, it was easier said than done. Most of the ships were not at the berths, but at anchors or barrels far from the coast. After walking along the piers for some time, admiring the forest of high masts that adorned the roadstead of the port of Hamburg, Felix Luckner found out that if he needed to get on a ship, then he should use the services of a carrier - the owner of a small skiff designed specifically for this purpose.

As the skiff drew closer to one of the sailboats, and Felix could really appreciate the height of its masts, he was horrified at the mere thought that he would have to climb to such a height to set and tuck the sails. But he immediately suppressed his fear, thinking that it was absolutely impossible to drive people to such a height. The sails are probably raised and removed somehow directly from the deck with the help of gear. This question puzzled Felix so much that he decided to consult the old ferryman who was at the oars. Are sailors sent to the masts to set sails?

— And how? the carrier was surprised. - There is no other way. In the harbor it is not so scary, but when the ship is at sea and it is thrown from side to side and thrown from side to side, then you will remember your own mother more than once.

High masts dampened the young aristocrat's ardor to become a sailor. He asked the old man to take him back to the shore, confessing that he did not feel like climbing the masts at all. The old sailor fully agreed with Felix, in turn admitting that he had been at sea for twenty-five years, but no benefits could lure him there anymore. And having learned that Felix's parents were rich aristocrats, he began to convince the boy to immediately return home and on his knees ask his father for forgiveness.

Knowing his dad, Felix said that it was still unknown what was more terrible: climbing the masts or trying the parent's stick.

"Let him stab your hump on your back," objected the ferryman, "and you only thank him for every blow.

Felix returned to the rooming house, where the desire to become a sailor returned to him with renewed vigor, but in a slightly modified form. Before venturing out to sea, Felix decided to practice on an old sailor's skiff inside the harbour.

The next day, having bought a pack of chewing tobacco for the old man, Felix went to his "companions" without pay. The old sailor taught him to "galan", that is, to row with the help of one oar from the stern, and soon Felix got so good at it that he began to independently transport passengers, leaving the old companion to make coffee on the shore. But the devil continued to tempt the young count.

He wanted to go to the open sea again. In vain did the old carrier try to dissuade him,

recounting the horrors and nightmares of naval service. Felix insisted, begging the old man to put him on a ship.

"But you don't have your parents' permission or money," the old man objected. No captain will take you.

Felix replied that if he had both, he would not have begged the old man, but would have settled myself.

The old man gave up.

One morning, when Felix came to the pier, the old man waved his hand at him from a distance and called out:

"Son, I found a ship for you!" I was transporting the Russian captain to his schooner and asked if he would like to take a smart guy with him. The captain agreed - only without salary. Now I will transfer you to the Russian schooner Niobe.

The Russian captain, who with his goat's beard resembled a cross between Mephistopheles and the French emperor Napoleon III, did not like Luckner at first sight.

"You can come with us," the captain said in broken German. "Be on the ship tomorrow morning.

Returning to the shore, Felix confessed to the old ferryman that he did not like the Russian captain at all.

"It doesn't matter," the old man patted him on the shoulder. - Whether it is a German, English or Russian ship - there is no difference. The sea strap is the same everywhere. Now, son, let's go to the city and equip you for the journey.

Felix still had ninety marks left. With them, the old sailor bought him everything that was needed at sea: warm clothes, a raincoat, a knife and a long smoking pipe with a supply of tobacco. There was not enough money for a sea chest, but the old man promised to give Felix his.

"I sailed with him for twenty-five years all over the world," he said. May it bring happiness to you too.

The old ferryman lived in one of the narrow streets of old Hamburg. The first thing Felix noticed when he entered the room where the old man lived was a model of a large three-masted sailboat. A stuffed flying fish hung from the ceiling, and a framed painting of a schooner under full sail hung on the wall. On the chest of drawers one could see various Japanese and Chinese souvenirs brought from distant voyages, in the corner there was a cage with disheveled and old, like its owner. The old man once brought a parrot from a parrot, Brazil, and he spoke only Spanish ...

The chest of the old sea dog was waterproof and did not sink in the water. All Felix's belongings were transferred there and set off back to the port.

In the morning the old man took Felix to the ship, showed him where his bunk was, and even put a mattress on it. Then they said goodbye. The last piece of advice the ferryman gave Felix was that when setting sail, always hold on to the spar or rigging with one hand.

- One hand for the ship, the other - for yourself.

## II

The schooner weighed anchor, and the tug began to take her to the outer roads. The carrier held on to his skiff until the very exit from the harbor. He managed to become attached to Felix, and parting was not easy for him. Tears streamed down the old sailor's cheeks.

Felix was also worried, also not from separation from his homeland, but from parting with the old man - the first adult in his life with whom he truly became friends.

On the ship, Felix felt completely helpless, if only because he did not understand a word of what was said around him. In addition, Felix soon began to catch the captain's malevolent glances.

The navigator, who spoke some English, asked Felix who his father was?

Without going into details, Felix replied that he was a farmer.

- Great! - the navigator was delighted. "Then I'll appoint you Chief Inspector." Come after me.

Intrigued by his new position, Felix followed the navigator, who led him to the pig pen.

"You will take care of the poor animals," ordered the navigator. - And besides, you will become the director of the "pharmacies" of the starboard and port sides.

"Pharmacy," Felix quickly learned, was the name given to the latrines on the schooner. From the performance of the duties assigned to him, Felix was soon saturated with such a smell that everyone on the schooner shied away from him. There was not enough water on the ship, and it was not possible to wash properly. Soon, all his clothes were smeared with human and pig sewage. He began to look dirtier than the pigs themselves.

Felix dared not climb the masts. The most he dared to do was to climb onto Mars, convulsively clinging to the shrouds. One of the sailors shouted to the young count that only pregnant cooks climb the shrouds like that.

Such an insult finished Felix. He almost threw himself upside down from Mars, so as not to be humiliated again, but overcame himself.

The schooner was at Cuxgafen, waiting for a fair wind. Felix used the parking lot and the calm weather to practice and get more or less comfortable with the masts.

Finally, a fair wind blew, the schooner raised her sails and went out to sea. Ahead of her was a long journey to Australia.

Felix had difficulty adjusting to ship life. They were forced to work a lot, but the food was bad. In the morning, instead of coffee, the sailors were given vodka, in which they had to soak the crackers. For lunch they gave out hard corned beef.

But gradually Felix began to get used to ship life, got used to the duties of a sailor and even learned to speak a little Russian. The navigator who appointed Felix chief inspector of pigs and director of latrines, in fact, turned out to be a good-natured man and, as best he could, patronized Felix. But the captain of his new sailor for some reason could not stand it.



In the Atlantic, the schooner was met by a strong storm. All the upper sails were removed, the storm sails were reefed, and so that the schooner could calmly hold out against the storm, it was only necessary to remove the main topsail. Felix decided to impress the captain and show him how well he could handle the job. But in his youthful impulse, Felix forgot the main rule that his first mentor, an old carrier from Hamburg, taught him: "One hand for the ship, the other for yourself." A gust of wind blew the sail like a balloon, Felix lost his balance and fell off the yard. Falling down, he tried to grab onto the sheet, but the tackle only burned his skin, and Felix fell into the sea at the very side of the schooner, which was moving at a speed of about eight knots. Felix was swept astern and swirled in the whirlpool of the wake.

Felix still had time to notice how a life buoy was thrown to him, he heard the command: "Man overboard!", But then plunged into the water, losing sight of the ship.

Then he was thrown into the crest of a wave, and Felix saw the schooner again. She had already managed to go far enough, and there was nothing to think of catching up with her by swimming. At a young age, death is not thought of, and Felix began to hope that some other ship would pick him up.

While he hoped that in the vast ocean some ships would pass exactly through the place where he fell, albatrosses swirled above him. These giant seabirds are used to believing that everything that floats on the surface of the ocean is intended for their food, and began to swoop down on Felix. One of the albatrosses grabbed Felix's outstretched hand with its beak and inflicted a wound on him, the scar of which remained with Luckner for life.

Felix kicked off his boots and raincoat, but he couldn't get rid of his sweatshirt, which was soaking wet and dragging him down. Felix remembered his mother's words about his desire to become a sailor: "You are preparing yourself a wonderful future to become food for sharks." As soon as Felix remembered these words, it seemed to him that the shark had already grabbed his legs. Terrified, he lost consciousness.

When he woke up, Felix saw a boat rising right in front of him on the crest of a wave. It seemed to him that the boat was about to pass by, and Felix screamed, trying to jump higher out of the water.

Fortunately, they noticed him and dragged him into the boat, in which the navigator was in charge. The sailors began to row back to the ship.

Felix was gushing blood from the wound inflicted by the albatross' beak, but the navigator explained that the bird had saved Felix's life by showing him where to look for him.

Felix correctly guessed that the captain would not be happy to save him, and he was right. The captain, gloomier than a cloud, walked up and down the poop and met the rescued with the words: "Damned German! You better drown! Look at the shape of the sails because of your slovenliness!"

The boat approached the side of the schooner, but it was not possible to lay the tackle on such a steep wave. When the ship went down on a wave, the boat was lifted high up, and when the schooner was raised, the boat was pulled down. Felix was in such a nervous state that when for a moment the boat came to the level of the bulwark of the schooner, he jumped onto the deck and lost consciousness.

The boat could not be raised, it was smashed into chips, the sailors jumped into the water, and they had to be pulled aboard by the ends.

Felix woke up when he felt that a bottle of vodka was put to his lips and heard the words of the captain: "Drink, German muzzle!"

Felix finally came to his senses only the next morning.

Then he was told that when he fell into the water, the captain did not want to hear about the launch of the boat in order to save him. Formally, he was right, since the descent of the boat in such conditions threatened with new casualties. But the navigator called volunteers into the boat and insisted on his own. According to the narrators, he even threatened the captain with a harpoon if he decides to interfere with him.

Finally, the schooner rounded the Cape of Good Hope and arrived at the Australian port of Fremantle. The first voyage of Felix Luckner ended and it was very difficult for him. Even worse than he thought. Thank God he's still alive.

While the Russian schooner was unloading, Felix, along with other sailors, often went ashore, where he met three sailors from a German steamer. He decided to escape from the schooner. Felix no longer wanted to serve without pay, subjected to constant bullying by the captain. On the eve of the departure of the Niobe, Felix, with the help of his new acquaintances, left the schooner and never returned to it. The captain could report this to the local police, but, fortunately, he did not use this right.

Once on the shore, Felix first got a job as a dishwasher in a hotel. But this work quickly disgusted him. For a change, he began attending Salvation Army meetings on Sundays and holidays. There he first saw the gramophone, which led the adventurer count to complete delight. He also liked the choral performance of the psalms. As a result, having made a commitment not to consume alcohol, Felix joined the Salvation Army, having escaped from the hotel.

First, he was instructed to sprinkle mothballs on old clothes that various charitable organizations supplied to the Salvation Army. Along the way, Felix was used for advertising, passing him off as an alcoholic put on the path of the "Salvation Army". At all meetings, he was shown to the public, announcing: "This young German sailor drank whiskey like water. We saved him!"

As a result, Felix quickly mastered the English language, he was given a uniform and instructed to distribute printed proclamations of the Salvation Army.

But Felix soon got tired of this activity. He was again pulled into the sea, about which he honestly informed his direct command of the "Salvation Army". The command did not object, but persuaded Felix, taking into account his young age, not to go to the sailors, but to act as an assistant lighthouse keeper in the port of Augusta.

The new position at the beginning also led Felix to complete delight. He was given a bright and clean room in the caretaker's house. His duties included: in the morning to clean the windows and reflectors of the lighthouse, and at night, every four hours, to pull the weights of the lighthouse clock mechanism. During the day, he was allowed to be on the top platform of the lighthouse and view the sea through powerful binoculars. It was especially good upstairs when a storm was raging down on the sea.

Felix liked everything here, but especially the daughter of one of the caretakers, whose name was Eva. Felix began flirting, which was quickly noticed by Eva's parents. One day her father had to break the door and break into Felix's room to catch the lovers red-handed. Felix was forced to flee from the lighthouse, taking with him one of the horses, on which he rode further in search of happiness.

Felix worked for two weeks at a sawmill near Augusta. Having saved some money, Felix returned to the city in order to move from there to some major Australian port and there again hire a sailboat.

On the pier, Felix met a lanky Norwegian hunter, belted with bandoliers and with a carbine on his shoulder. The hunter told Felix that he hunted kangaroos and made good money selling the skins. This made an impression on Felix, and he persuaded the Norwegian to sell him a carbine and cartridges, giving him all his money, and in addition watch.

Armed, Felix went deep into the continent. But the hunter's tales seemed, to put it mildly, somewhat exaggerated. No matter how much Felix walked through the forests and fields, not a single animal came across to him. After living for several days in an abandoned forest hut, Felix returned to Augusta, where the first thing he did was to sell a carbine.

A steamship has just arrived at the port of Augusta carrying a traveling circus. Felix managed to get a job at the circus, pitching tents, caring for horses, etc. He really liked the charm of the wandering life of the "circus performers", who, in essence, were also sailors, although they wandered on land. In addition, Felix was attracted by a large number of Hindu girls who were part of the circus troupe. As a result, the young earl agreed to become a magician's apprentice and went with the circus on a journey throughout Australia.

However, the magicians were in no hurry to teach the boy their art. He tried to penetrate their secrets himself, but it turned out to be absolutely impossible. Felix then decided to use a more sophisticated Method and for this purpose began to court a young girl from Malaya.

Within a few weeks he managed to extort from her the secrets of some tricks, but he soon realized that it was simply impossible for a European to comprehend the secret of Eastern magic. Experienced magician-fakirs generally gave the impression of supernatural beings. Felix traveled all over Australia with the circus, but in Brisbane the young man was again pulled into the sea, and he fell behind them, having settled down as a sailor on an English line.

Once, sitting on the shore, Felix was washing his clothes, when three strangers approached him and inquired how old he was?

"Fifteen," Felix lied.

Admiring the muscles of Felix, unknown people suggested that he take up boxing. Felix gladly agreed, and they went to a boxing school. There, the young sailor was offered free education plus a salary of six pounds, with one indispensable condition: in all boxing competitions, he would play only for the Queensland team. Felix agreed, and they began to teach him the wisdom of boxing. At school, Felix lived excellently.

Five months later, they decided to send him to San Francisco for professional improvement, but Felix himself considered that he had already acquired enough knowledge in boxing and again yearned for the sea.

Wherever he was, whatever he was fond of, the craving for the sea always overcame all other feelings and thoughts, returning Felix to the deck of the ship.

This time, without much difficulty, he managed to get hired on the American four-masted schooner Golden Beach, which carried either timber or sugar between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Felix was immediately hired as a first-class sailor, with a salary of forty-five dollars a month. But, being an adventurer and adventurer at heart, Felix, after his first arrival in Honolulu, escaped from the schooner along with another German sailor, wishing

engage in fishing and fish trading, as well as hunting. All that was missing to carry out the plan was a ship and a gun, since the friends decided to fish for a day and hunt for a day. Since all this was not feasible in Honolulu, the friends returned to the schooner, deciding to postpone their plans until Vancouver, where the schooner was heading.

When they got to Vancouver, Felix and his new friend got hold of a Winchester rifle, and in the nearby fishing village of Modeville, they decided to steal a boat. There were many dogs in the village, but, nevertheless, with the onset of darkness, friends managed to take the boat away. On it, they swam to a small sailing ship, climbed on it and raised the anchor. It is not possible for two already experienced sailors to set sails. presented no difficulty. Unfortunately, there was no wind, and the sails did not want to be filled. From the shore, they noticed the movement of the schooner, they decided that it was drifting at anchor, and the fishermen, climbing into the boat, headed for the ship. At this time, the schooner came out from under the cover of the coastal rocks, the sails were filled with wind and, picking up speed, she went to the open sea. The fishermen fired a few shots and fell behind, while Felix and his friend rode a stolen schooner to Seattle Bay. They were lucky - there was a large German sailboat in the bay. The German sailors rejoiced at the fellow countrymen, giving them bread, crackers and white lead. Friends repainted the ship white and started fishing.

But they quickly got tired of this occupation. They decided to return the schooner to the fishermen in Modeville and go hunting. It was then that both of them were covered, handed over to the police, and since both attackers were minors, their case was heard in the correctional court. The court was lenient, and friends got off with several weeks of imprisonment. The prosecutor argued that Felix Luckner, judging by all his habits, was a complete pirate, and demanded a more severe punishment, but the court did not take his arguments into account. If the British knew then how much headache Felix's "pirate talent" would bring them in the future, then they probably would not have released him from prison, at least until the end of the First World War!

### III

After leaving prison, Felix decided to return to his homeland. He was hired by the English sailing ship Pinmore, on which he made a 285-day voyage from San Francisco to Liverpool, never having been offshore. At first, the sailboat drifted for a long time due to complete calm, and even longer overcame the oncoming storm at Cape Horn. During the voyage, six people died of scurvy and sleeping sickness. There was only one hundred and eighty-five days of food on the Pinmore, and even less water. In addition, the water available on the ship turned out to be spoiled due to the fact that the tanks were leaking.

Everyone's legs began to swell, no one was able to work on the yards, and they had to go only under storm sails. At the same time, not a single ship came across, and there was not a single rain during the entire flight. Off the Scilli Islands (southwest coast of Britain) the last batch of peas was divided.

When a tugboat approached the sailboat in the English Channel, he was greeted with desperate cries: "Water! Water!"

After spending two weeks in the hospital, Felix went to Hamburg. During the voyage, Felix earned more than a thousand marks and proudly walked around the city. It was December - the time of the famous Hamburg fair, and Felix had plenty of fun during the festivities, defeated the famous fair wrestler Lipstulian in one of the booths, winning a prize of twenty marks.

After walking in this way for two weeks, Felix hired himself on the German schooner *Caesarea*, which was going to go from Hamburg to Melbourne. It was the first German ship on which Felix Luckner had to serve. The captain of the schooner was a very experienced sailor, but terribly mean and petty. Together with the cook, he did everything possible to cut the sailor's ration and save "food money".

In response, the sailors stole several hams from the galley. The captain suspected that the cook had stolen them and hidden them somewhere for himself. The matter ended with the fact that the cook was deeply offended and ran away from the schooner in Newcastle. The ship was left without cook, and none of the crew wanted to take its place. Then the captain decided to appoint the cook as his authority and, having learned that Felix knew how to boil water, he chose him. The hungry Felix agreed, hoping to eat properly in the officer's food battalion. There he filled his belly full of plums, dried apples and jam, and also emptied two cans of pickles. Felix cooked peas for the team on the first day of his tenure, discreetly slipping a ham bone into it and pouring in a bottle of red wine. The captain and the whole crew decided that Felix was a born cook. From such praise, Felix became proud, and the next day the peas burned. Felix added a few more handfuls of peas to the cauldron and another bottle of red wine. In addition, he heard that, in case of burning, soda is usually used. In what quantity, he did not know, and therefore added more soda.

The captain did not get up from his bunk for three days, and Felix was kicked out of the galley, replaced by another sailor.

They got to Melbourne without any special incidents, handed over the cargo, loaded coal and headed to the Chilean port of Caleta Billona, where they took saltpeter into the holds, and went to Plymouth. On this voyage, Felix officially received the title of sailor first class. He was already able to independently set the fore-bramsel, which was officially recorded in the logbook and the sailor's book.

Off the Falkland Islands, the schooner fell into the zone of a strong cyclone. The storm was favorable, and at first the schooner was going well along the course. But as the storm intensified, it became more and more dangerous to go with the wind. It was necessary to gybe. In the event of a delay with this maneuver, the ship would have been threatened with certain death, since the waves rushing from the stern could sweep away everything in their path.

Gigantic waves came up from behind and crashed into the stern of the *Caesarea*. The schooner sailed under four sails at a speed of ten knots. Finally, the sailboat managed to break through to the center of the cyclone, where complete calm and silence reigned. Because of the calm, the ships in the center of the cyclone lost their speed and became a toy for the raging waves, which the wind drove from all sides to the center of the cyclone. The only salvation was to pass through this center as quickly as possible. Having lost her topmasts and scooping water with her sides, the *Caesar* managed to pass through the center of the cyclone, and the schooner again fell into a fierce storm, which roared with redoubled force. Bram-yards and marsa-yards crashed down and hung overboard. Most of the rigging was torn off. Prepared for imminent death, Felix himself did not understand how they managed to jump out of the cyclone. Everything on deck was broken and ruined, the holds were full of water. Now I had to work day and night: fix the rigging, shoot new topmasts, pump out water from the holds with hand pumps.

After a 120-day passage, the *Caesarea* finally arrived at Plymouth. The entire crew, with the exception of Felix and two other sailors, immediately left the ship. Several new sailors arrived from Hamburg, and the rest were recruited directly from Plymouth. For the most part, these were stokers who had never had to go to sea under sail. Such a team did not bode well for the schooner.

The *Caesarea* received at Plymouth a cargo of chalk in barrels and three hundred tons of arsenic in small barrels. There was little cargo, it was not distributed quite correctly, which caused

concern for the stability of the vessel. The destination was New York, and the captain expected to get there quickly. However, constant storms greatly slowed down the schooner's path. Former stokers, who were nicknamed "steamboat donkeys", did not know how to handle sails or stand at the helm, leaving Felix and several other experienced sailors to do this work. Those, in turn, considering the stokers parasites, vented their indignation and anger on them.

After a long period of storms, the weather finally cleared up, a fair wind blew, making it possible to put the bramsail.

Christmas was approaching, and the captain decided to celebrate it solemnly. A Christmas tree was built from mops and goliks, which was decorated with colored paper and various tinsel. Each member of the team received a Christmas present from the captain - a pound of tobacco. In addition, the captain presented the sailors with a ham and a valley with gin. Christmas candles were lit in the cockpit, and a deputation of sailors went to the captain to congratulate him on the holiday and invite him to admire the Christmas tree. The captain went to the sailors on the forecastle, and the cook brought out a valley with gin. The sailors poured the gin into glasses, preparing to clink glasses with each other and  
captain.

And at that moment, the so-called "white squall" suddenly hit the schooner. This squall is called "white" because its approach is imperceptible. A squall swooped in from the front, pulling the schooner back. The fore-topmast flew overboard, followed by the mainmast, only masts.

The sailors rushed to the tackle, most of which turned out to be torn, they hung from both sides, fluttering through the air. The captain rushed to the helm, as the helmsman was knocked off his feet, and he lay half dead on the bridge deck. He died from severe injuries a couple of days later.

Only the sails on the lower yards survived. Chopping off the ends with axes, the sails were carried to the wind in order to tell the schooner at least some move. After four hours of hard labor, the schooner was again brought under control. At the same time, by some miracle, no one was killed or washed overboard, although the waves rolled freely over the sailboat that had lost control.

And the stokers hired in Plymouth did not even leave the cockpit, hiding there like moles. And the storm, meanwhile, intensified, soon reaching the strength of a hurricane. Under the weight of the cargo, the middle deck collapsed, and the holds began to leak. Everyone rushed to reload the barrels of arsenic, most of which burst. Arsenic corroded the eyes, and all over the body broke out a rash.

The schooner received a strong trim on the bow. Sailors, replacing each other, tried to stop the flow of water with hand pumps. A huge wave, having fallen on the Caesar, washed away the galley along with the cook, stove, boiler, utensils and coal box. There was nothing to think about saving the cook. For forty-eight hours the sailors worked at the pumps, but the water kept coming. Felix Luckner realized that he was not able to work anymore - he had no strength. Everyone else was exhausted as well. No persuasion and threats from the captain could bring people back to the pumps.

At this time, another gigantic wave hit the Caesarea from the stern with such force that six sailors were knocked down. Two of them were instantly washed overboard, one was pressed against the shrouds, his arm was torn off, and then also carried into the sea. Another was crushed in the skull, and the body of another, with shattered bones, rolled across the deck from side to side.

Felix, too, was knocked off his feet and not swept overboard only because his leg was caught between a mast fragment and a pump flywheel. The leg was crushed so that the bone was broken. The schooner was tossed and turned on the waves. Wave after wave washed over Felix, and he risked drowning while lying on the deck. The clamped leg did not allow either to stand up or crawl into

another place.

The sailors moved the fallen mast with crowbars, freed Felix and carried him to the cabin.  
captain.

Meanwhile, the position of the ship became more and more hopeless. The bow was already submerged up to the bowsprit, and there was only one thing left to do - to leave the schooner, seeking salvation in the boats. Fortunately, the ship's carpenter quickly managed to put a splint on Felix's broken leg, and he received  
the opportunity to be saved together with everyone.

The boats were thrown overboard on long lines, while oil was poured into the sea to reduce the waves. Tying the ends, the sailors jumped overboard and swam to the boats. The next, holding on to the same ends, swam after them. One boat went with the captain, the other with the navigator.

Having rolled away from the dying schooner, the sailors only rowed with oars in order to hold out against the wave. It was impossible to row forward - the boats would immediately turn over.

This went on for the rest of the day and the next night.

The boats had a small supply of crackers and drinking water. The cold and several sleepless nights so exhausted the sailors that many were already thinking with relief about imminent death. The captain, being an experienced sailor who had already been in similar situations more than once, tried to cheer up his subordinates:

- Hold on guys! Don't give up on life so easily! Don't get discouraged and panic!

He kept the sailors from drinking salt water, which would only hasten their death. Everyone was so thirsty that they sucked their own fingers just to cause separation.  
saliva.

This went on for four days, at the end of which a steamship appeared on the horizon. Someone's trousers were tied to the oar and they began to wave them. Everyone fell silent in expectation and hope, peering intently at the steamer: will he notice them or not? It already seemed to many that the ship was changing course, heading towards those in distress. But this was not the case - the ship was moving further and further away and, finally, disappeared from view.

Luckily, the wind has calmed down a bit. It was possible, sitting in shifts, to sleep. Felix, who, because of a broken leg, suffered more than others, had the idea to choose a victim by lot and quench his thirst with his blood. He held back the fear that the lot might fall on him. After the ship disappeared, the captain could no longer control the behavior of the sailors, who decided to drink all the rest of the fresh water. And there be what will be. It didn't matter anymore.

In the morning again, we saw the ship. The sailors again began to swing the oar with their pants tied to it, not really hoping for anything anymore. But this time they were noticed from the steamer and turned to help. There was no longer any strength to be happy. The sight of the approaching steamer, on the contrary, brought the sailors into a state of some kind of stupefaction.

Storm ladders were thrown from the ship, but no one had the strength to climb them. No one could get up at all, leaving the saviors to do whatever they wanted.

The ship's crew used cargo booms to lift the survivors from the boat to their side. Felix had absolutely no memory of how he ended up on the ship. He slept for sixteen hours without realizing where he was.

The steamer went to New York, where Felix Luckner was handed over to a German hospital. When

they unbandaged his leg, it was all black. The doctor, examining the protruding bone, shook his head ruefully. He had no doubt that gangrene had set in. But the next day some old professor came and pleased Felix: it was not gangrene, but a huge bruise. We will treat.

After lying in the hospital for eight weeks, Felix was hired by the Canadian schooner Flying Fish, which was leaving for Jamaica with a load of timber. Shortly before the end of the flight, Felix broke his leg again by his own negligence. He was brought to a hospital in Jamaica in what he was: in a Dutch coat, trousers and one boot. All other things remained on the ship.

Two weeks later, someone from the hospital administration asked Felix if he had any money left on the ship. Felix had six pounds left, which he reported. But it turned out that the captain of the schooner had left only three pounds at the consulate, and he appropriated the rest of Felix's money, including his salary. The young sailor found himself without clothes and without a penny in his pocket. The hospital administration, without thinking twice, threw him out, and Felix found himself on the street with a plastered leg.

Leaning on a stick, he barely reached the sandy beaches, where he decided to settle. There, at least, one could sleep buried in the warm sand. Felix ate coconuts, which he found disgusting, but lived on them for three days, waiting for the arrival of an English steamer in the port.

Leaning on a stick, dragging his plastered leg behind him, Felix boarded the ship. He was unshaven, dirty, without a cap, his hair hung in long tufts, from a face burned by the sun

peeled off the skin.

The ship was unloading coal. Felix sought out the watch officer, hoping to talk to him, but he met him with a long English curse and drove him out.

Dumbfounded by this encounter, Felix descended back to the quay, taking an empty coal bag with him, not knowing why. Having met some Negro, he asked to cut his plaster cast and obviously hurried - the leg had not yet healed. In the heat of the tropical sun, the leg responded with excruciating pain. Here the sack stolen on the steamer, with which Felix wrapped his injured leg, came in handy. At night, this bag served as a pillow for him.

Three more days passed. Felix lived on the beach, eating coconuts and bananas. One day, hobbled along the bank of a small stream that flowed on the outskirts of the city, Felix came across a bamboo grove where an old negro was cutting bamboo trunks. Felix kept his sailor's knife, and he offered to help the Negro, earning sixpence for food. Although the negro looked at Felix very suspiciously, he allowed him to spend the night in his barn. In the morning, after breakfast of corn, they again cut bamboo. In the midst of the work, Felix noticed that a white steamer was approaching the island from the sea. After saying goodbye to the negro, Felix wandered into the harbor.

The ship that arrived turned out to be the German gunboat Panther. Many sailors from the canoe went ashore, and Felix decided to ask for help from his fellow countrymen. In one of the groups, he noticed a tall sailor who spoke with a strong Saxon accent, and addressed him in his native dialect, talking about the plight in which he had fallen. He asked the sailor to bring him some bread. He hurried back to the ship, but told Felix to come to the dock at six o'clock.

In the evening, a new acquaintance brought Felix a whole loaf of black bread and told him that he could come every evening for bread. The next evening, Felix asked the sailor to get him a cap and a pair of shoes. Since Sunday was approaching, on which the sailors could bring their friends on board, the sailor from the Panther invited Felix



come aboard the gunboat tomorrow. He began to refuse, but a new friend persuaded him, and in the morning Felix came aboard the Panther. The sailors sat at a table laid right on the forecastle and drank coffee. Felix felt like an unfortunate tramp who got into the house of the rich. The sailors invited Felix to the table, but at that moment an officer of the watch appeared on the forecastle. The sailors got up. Felix got up too. The officer, seeing him, sharply commanded: "Messenger!"

Yes, Lieutenant! - Holding his hand at the peakless cap, a messenger flew up.

"Throw this guy overboard," ordered the lieutenant. "In the future, take measures to prevent such a bastard from entering the ship!"

The messenger went up to Felix and said softly:

- Come on, quickly, blow on the wall!

A Saxon friend managed to whisper to Felix in parting: "Tomorrow, for you, I will steal his trousers and cap from the lieutenant. Come to the pier as usual."

Felix was shocked. To get on your native ship, to hear your native speech, being under the shadow of the German naval flag, in order to eventually hear the words addressed to him in your native language: "Throw this bastard overboard!"

Dragging his aching leg wrapped in a coal bag, Felix wandered along the pier. Tears of resentment flowed down his dirty, unshaven cheeks. The Panther's watch officer's words continued to echo in his ears. He wanted to hide somewhere where no one could see him.

It is unlikely that he even now remembered that he was an earl by birth. And even less could he imagine that, after not so many years, he would again board the Panther, but this time as the commander of this gunboat of the German fleet. He will be appointed to this post by his own decree of Kaiser Wilhelm II, to whom Felix told this story during an audience ...

But that is yet to come, and for now, Felix, chewing on the biscuits received as parting from the sailors of the Panther, waited for the evening to come to meet his new friends again.

At ten o'clock in the evening, in the dark, two sailors handed Felix blue trousers, a cap, canvas boots, socks, vests, soap and a razor. Felix had never been so happy in his life. Having put himself in order and dressed up, Felix immediately got a job as a mooring sailor. He had to, being on the wall, take mooring lines from suitable ships and put them on the bollards. The pay was good, and Felix felt like a man again. But he was mortally drawn to the sea.

A month later, he was hired as a sailor on the New Scottia schooner, which sailed around the islands of the Caribbean.

During one of the voyages, the schooner came to the Mexican port of Tampico, where Felix (for the umpteenth time!) was seized by a thirst for vagrancy. Felix and one of his friends asked the captain to leave for a few days. On horseback, they went inland - to the Mexican prairies and began to live there among cowboys, herds of mustangs, countless herds of bison and other exotics. They learned to throw a lasso, participated in horse races and rodeos, and, of course, they missed the ship. When they got back to Tampico, the schooner had already left. But both sailors were not very upset. In such a fertile country as Mexico, it was possible, working as a porter in the bazaar, to earn both food, girls, and card games. When they got tired of running around with baskets, both enlisted in the military, becoming soldiers of the Mexican army. The service was not very difficult. exercises

none were carried out, but I had to stand guard "at the palace where the Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz lived. As one could easily predict, the military service quickly bored both sailors, they deserted from the army and entered the construction of the railway. Quickly escaping from the construction site, both reached the port of Veracruz, where they were hired on a tanker bound for Havana. In Havana, Felix enlisted on a Norwegian sailing ship that sailed to Liverpool with a call to New York. Felix learned the Norwegian language on the sailing ship, not yet guessing how it would be useful to him in the future.

From Liverpool, Felix went to Hamburg.

#### IV

In Hamburg, Felix came up with the idea to pass the exam for a navigator's diploma. But for this it was necessary to have sailing experience on steamboats. Felix took a job as a sailor on one of the cargo ships and sailed on it for several months in the Mediterranean and North Seas. Returning to Germany, he entered the nautical school in Lübeck.

By this time, Felix was already twenty years old. He already understood that if you want, you don't want, but you have to go through these torments. Felix knew that this was what every navigator and captain he knew had to do. That you cannot take a step in a maritime career without receiving a special education. What a maritime education was, Felix understood rather vaguely. The main thing, he believed, was practical knowledge and the ability to find a way out of a difficult situation. When the Masts collapse and the rigging breaks, no knowledge of higher mathematics will help ...

At the nautical school, Felix again felt like a complete nonentity. With his three classes at the gymnasium, he was a complete ignoramus. Felix did not know how to write correctly, did not know the literary German language, and spoke in rough maritime jargon. He had to start arithmetic right from the basics. Felix had no idea about fractions, not even understanding the difference between the numerator and the denominator. In addition to classes at school, every day I had to take private lessons, learning trigonometry, navigation, astronomy and much more. Sometimes Felix was in complete despair, seeing how hard his head perceives any teaching. But Felix persevered and worked like a convict for nine months, preparing himself enough to take the risk and try to pass the exam.

The exams lasted a whole week, and as a result, Felix von Luckner received a diploma as a sea navigator.

Having received a diploma, Felix got a job as a watch navigator on the Petropolis steamer of the Hamburg-American line. Pride filled the young sailor. He bought himself an elegant suitcase, kid gloves, patent leather shoes, and even shirt cufflinks. These were his first cufflinks in his life. Walking through the spardeck of the Petropolis in his new uniform, Felix felt like a young god. More recently, he was a sailor, forced to do hard and menial work. The change in fate and position seemed to him a miracle.

After sailing for a year on the Petropolis, Felix took advantage of the right arising from his new position and entered the navy as a cadet. Having bought a second-class ticket for the first time in his life, Felix arrived in Kiel, where he spent a year in the barracks and on the warships of the Kaiser fleet. At the end of the year he was promoted to junior lieutenant in the reserve. In the next two years, Felix Luckner sailed on the large merchant ships of the Hamburg Line,

free time self-education to pass the exam for sea captain.

While in Hamburg, the young navigator liked to sail on his own yacht near the mouth of the Elbe. One day, while enjoying a sailing trip, Felix saw a sailboat drifting helplessly on a rather large wave. Later it turned out that the owner of the boat - a merchant from Cologne - did not know how to control the sails at all. A gust of wind on the boat knocked down the mizzen mast, and the unfortunate yachtsman found himself overboard. When Felix approached on his yacht, the "athlete" had already disappeared under the waves, since he did not even know how to swim. To save him, Felix had to dive to a fairly considerable depth. Having emerged with him to the surface, Luckner was just about to fill his lungs with air, like an unfortunate man, convulsively clinging to Felix with his hands and wrapping his legs around him, dragged his savior to the bottom.

Freeing his legs with great difficulty, Felix pushed the drowning man away from him and again emerged to the surface. It was already getting dark in his eyes, but, catching his breath, he dived again: Grabbing the dying man by the hair, Luckner swam with him against the current for a long time, rowing with one hand, and, as they say, with his last breath he reached the shore, climbed out onto the sand and lost consciousness. The gathered crowd of onlookers brought him and the rescued to his senses.

Since then, as soon as Felix appeared somewhere on the seashore, someone was sure to drown, and he had to save a drowning man.

On December 24, 1910, Luckner stood at the quay in Hamburg, waiting for the ferry. Suddenly, in the dim light of port lamps, he saw a man floundering in the water. Felix immediately prepared to throw himself into the water, but a customs inspector standing nearby caught him by the arm. The temperature was thirteen degrees below zero. The inspector thought it would be better to let one die rather than two. But Felix escaped from his grasp and jumped into the water. The icy water burned him. It seemed as if a red-hot nail had stuck into the back of the head, but Luckner swam twenty-five meters separating him from the drowning man. Fortunately, he was very drunk, and therefore easily kept on the water, even ossified. Felix swam with him to the pier, where they were both pulled out, taken to the nearest tavern, where they gave punch to drink, wrapped in warm blankets. The rescued Felix turned out to be an Englishman, and since the whole story took place on Christmas Day, almost all the newspapers reported on it. They said that this is already the fifth person rescued by Felix Luckner, but he has not yet received a medal for saving drowning people.

The medal for saving the drowning, according to tradition, was presented by the commander of the high seas fleet, Admiral Prince Heinrich of Prussia. While awarding Felix with a medal, the admiral asked if Count von Luckner would like to transfer from the reserve to active service in the navy? Felix agreed and was called up from the reserve with the rank of lieutenant for the so-called test course.

I had to again sit down for textbooks and in two months to comprehend what was allotted in naval schools in those days for three and a half years. The officer environment received Felix generally well, but there were those who could not forgive Count von Luckner for his wandering past.

"Apparently, the imperial fleet is now becoming a haven for vagabonds driven out of their parental home," one of the officers loudly declared. However, Felix himself had to admit that in the sixty years of the existence of the Imperial Navy, he became the first person with such a turbulent past and such a low cultural and educational level, who was accepted into the fleet in peacetime as an officer.

After passing the test course and a year of probation, Lieutenant Count von Luckner was finally enlisted in the lists of officers of the Imperial Navy and

sent to serve on the battleship Preussen as a watch officer.

It cannot be said that such a born vagabond as Felix was easily accustomed to that iron discipline elevated to the absolute and almost brought to the point of absurdity, which reigned in those years on the ships of the Kaiser fleet. It wasn't easy for him. The officers, in turn, sensed a stranger in him, considering him a rude dork, far from the prim ethics of the Prussian officer corps.

But luck again smiled at Felix Luckner.

Soon he was promoted to lieutenant and transferred to the light cruiser Niobe as a senior officer. This appointment could well be considered a reference, since the Niobe had been under repair in Danzig for the third year already and would probably have rotted there if the First World War had not begun. There was no commander on the cruiser, and more or less naval order was maintained on it by thirty sailors, two non-commissioned officers and one junior lieutenant. And then Felix, who was promoted to lieutenant, was added to them.

Tosca was green. Luckner was again so drawn to the sea that he thought about deserting and fleeing somewhere to Australia or South Africa, where he could be hired on a sailing schooner and once again go through all the oceans on it. But, since the naval instructors, who sculpted an officer of the Imperial Navy from the sea tramp Felix Luckner, knocked a lot of foolishness out of his head, Felix, under the weight of his officer epaulettes, was not able to carry out his plan, and drowned out his longing in the restaurants of Danzig, squandering an officer's salary there. He prayed to Heaven for help, and his prayer was answered.

Once he was standing in splendid isolation on the poop of the Niobe at the mothballed stern gun, when he saw that the boat of the mayor of Danzig, Dr. von Schwabe, was sailing past the cruiser. Suddenly, a port tug coming from the roadstead appeared from somewhere, crashed into the boat of the mayor and smashed it into chips. Everyone, including Dr. von Schwabe, found themselves in icy water, for it was the autumn of 1912. The tugboat, which received a roll during the collision, quickly headed for the shore and stumbled aground.

There were no boats on the Niobe, because they were not supposed to be in reserve. Without hesitation, Felix rushed overboard, having managed to throw off only his jacket and boots, pulled out old Schwabe and delivered him to the Niobe. The story of the rescue of the Danzig mayor by a naval officer went around almost all the newspapers in Germany. Luckner became a celebrity and was requested to Berlin, where he received the highest audience.

Such a refined aristocrat as Kaiser Wilhelm II was immediately struck by a certain discrepancy between the title and manners of Count von Luckner.

"Count," asked the Kaiser, awarding Felix with the silver medal "For Bravery," "why haven't I heard anything about you before?" What year did you graduate from the Academy? Are you a descendant of Count Luckner, who was Seydlitz's adjutant?

Felix honestly told the Kaiser the story of his life.

Wilhelm II, who until his death remained a romantic of the sea, was shocked. He was especially impressed by the story that happened to Felix on board the gunboat Panther, when she was in Jamaica, and Felix was insulted by the officer of the watch.

"If you challenge him to a duel today, Count," the Kaiser exclaimed, "then I will be your second!" God, how romantic!

The Kaiser thought for a moment and continued:

— Count Luckner! I can't do otherwise! I appoint you commander of the Panther and promote you to lieutenant commander! You will again board this ship, but already as its commander. God, how romantic! You will receive the corresponding order in two weeks.

The gunboat "Panther" was in those years perhaps the most famous of the ships of the Kaiser fleet. More recently, in July 1911, the appearance of a gunboat at the Moroccan port of Agadir, called the "Panther's Leap" by newspapers around the world, almost led to the start of a world war, but ended in a sharp cooling of relations between Germany and England.

"Panther" operated off the coast of West Africa. When Lieutenant Commander Luckner arrived on the gunboat, those who fed Felix in Jamaica with official bread were still serving on the gunboat.

Whether they recognized in their new commander the degenerate tramp whom they actually saved from death is unknown. Whether Felix recognized them is also unknown. The commander must in no way undermine his authority in the eyes of his subordinates...

In the spring of 1914, the Panther, which had been sailing abroad for three years, returned to Germany for repairs. In July, the repair was completed, and Luckner brought the gunboat to Danzig, from where, after undergoing post-repair tests, the Panther was to go back to African waters.

On July 17, Luckner received a short radiogram: "The campaign is cancelled." Everyone already knew what was going on. The war was coming.

On August 2, the mobilization of the fleet began, taking place in the wake of a patriotic upsurge. But Luckner, aboard the Panther, was in a depressed mood. He longed for active activity, which was absolutely impossible on the old slow-moving gunboat with her two guns.

At the beginning of the war, the Panther was ordered to guard the minefield set up at Langeland. Then the boat was transferred to carry out guard duty near the island of Aroe in the Lesser Belt, which meant circling around the island around the clock. The violent soul of Felix Luckner was eager to fight, and he was no longer able to command the Panther.

In the old days, when any activity bothered him, he did not hesitate for a second, just ran away, relying mainly on the mercy of Providence. Now, when he commanded a warship in wartime, this was, of course, impossible. The only thing that could be done was to write off the Panther due to illness. In collusion with the ship's doctor, Felix feigned an attack of appendicitis and was sent to Kiel for an operation. Having then taken a post-operative leave, Felix was assigned to the newest battleship Kronprinz, serving on which he took part in the battle of Jutland, commanding one of the main caliber artillery towers. Shortly after this famous battle, Felix was appointed artillery officer on the auxiliary cruiser Meve. The cruiser stood in Hamburg, preparing for the campaign.

One evening, when Luckner was visiting his friend, drinking a bottle of Swedish punch with him and telling him about his dream to go to the ocean as the captain of a sailing schooner, a messenger who arrived from the Meve handed him a prescription. Lieutenant Commander Count von Luckner was called to the Naval Headquarters in Berlin.

Agitated and wondering what all this must mean, Felix immediately left for Berlin.

When Luckner entered the office of the Chief of the Naval Staff, his heart was pounding like never before in his life.

- What would you say, count, - the admiral asked, - if we appointed you the commander of a sailing auxiliary cruiser, on which you, having broken through the English blockade, were to break into the ocean and start a war with enemy shipping? We chose you because you are one of the few officers in the fleet today with extensive sailing experience...

Luckner, who was not distinguished by good manners, almost rushed to hug the admiral. To become the commander of a sailing vessel, which, moreover, received the status of a separate warship, was the ultimate of his dreams. What he honestly said.

"In that case," the admiral summed up, "you are appointed commander of the Pass of Balmakh sailing vessel."

Unable to feel his feet with joy, Felix hurried to Geestmünde, where there was a sailboat, which, under the direction of Lieutenant Kling, was being rebuilt into an auxiliary cruiser. The idea to use the schooner as an auxiliary cruiser was submitted by Kling, who sent several reports to the Admiralty, proving the advantage of sailing ships in cruising war, since they do not depend on coal. The Admiralty agreed in the end with Kling's arguments, after which the schooner Pass of Balmaha was chosen to carry out the plan. Previously, the schooner sailed under the American flag, carrying wool from Arkhangelsk. On one of these trips, the schooner was intercepted by an English cruiser, who landed a prize crew on her and ordered her to go to Kirkval for inspection. But on the way, the Pass of Balmakh was again intercepted - this time by the German submarine I-36. The English prize crew hid in fear in the hold, where the American captain of the schooner locked them up, throwing the British weapons overboard. But the boat also landed the prize crew on the schooner and brought it to Kugsgafets, to which the English prize crew sitting in the hold, as they say, traveled incognito. Only four days later, hungry, pale and exhausted, the British climbed up to the great amazement of the German sailors who were on the schooner. Thus, the schooner, not yet included in the German fleet, had already captured several Englishmen and, apparently, therefore, was chosen by the General Staff as a raider.

The American captain, who expected that the next schooner under a neutral flag would be released, was very disappointed, but glad that he survived.

In Geestmünde, where, as in any other German port, there were a lot of English spies, it was first of all necessary to hide from the port workers that the schooner was being converted into an auxiliary cruiser. Luckner and Kling assured everyone that the Pass of Balmaha was being rebuilt as a training ship for the junior fleet. In the premises where it was supposed to keep the prisoners in the future, signs were hung: "A room for sixty cabin boys." When an auxiliary diesel engine was installed on the schooner, a sign was hung in the compartment where it was installed: "Class for the study of motor business."

Luckner himself disguised himself in civilian clothes, posing as engineer von Eckmann from the Naval Ministry. He came to the port only from time to time, supervising the progress of work on the training ship, which received the false name "Walter". The schooner was equipped with a tank for diesel fuel with a capacity of 480 tons and for fresh water with a capacity of 360 tons. The food supply was supposed to be taken for two years. The entire middle deck was intended for prisoners, who could accommodate up to four hundred people on a schooner. For captured captains and officers, cabins were equipped for two or three people each, with washbasins and other amenities. A separate wardroom was also equipped for the captured captains. For the prisoners on the schooner, English and

French books, gramophone, chess and cards.

At the same time, false documents had to be prepared for the schooner. It was a very difficult task, since it was necessary to find a sailboat that looked like a captured American schooner. It would be best if that sailboat was intended to transport timber. The timber can always be loaded onto the deck, lashed to it with chains, and it cannot be removed from the deck when the schooner is inspected by the enemy prize team. In this way, it is possible to block access to hatches leading to the holds, where guns and other cargo are hidden, which must be hidden from inspection. After a long search, we managed to find such a sailboat. It turned out to be the Norwegian schooner Maletta, which was at that moment in Copenhagen and was about to go to Melbourne. Therefore, all false papers were issued to the Maletta, and Luckner's subordinates made every effort to make their schooner outwardly resemble the Maletta.

Barometers, manometers and thermometers were ordered from Norway. Norwegian postcards and photographs of Norwegian beauties adorned the bulkheads of cabins and cockpits.

When the message came that an electric capstan was installed on the Maletta during her stay in Copenhagen, Luckner ordered the installation of the same on his sailboat, making a corresponding entry in the logbook: "Knudsen and Co., Copenhagen."

One of the most difficult tasks facing Luckner was the formation of the crew. In fact, he needed to have two crews on the schooner. One combat, the number of which was determined by the Main Naval Staff at sixty-four people, the second - camouflage, consisting of twenty-three people who spoke fluent Norwegian. Moreover, both those and others had to have experience of sailing on sailing ships. It was already quite difficult to find such people in 1916. People were selected individually. Luckner had a long conversation with each of them, asking in detail where and on what he swam. At the same time, it was necessary to be careful in conversations so that no one would be sure that the crew was being recruited for a sailboat. Any leak of information could destroy the future auxiliary cruiser immediately after going to sea. Therefore, Luckner talked with sailors who had experience in ocean sailing, without apparent interest, enlivening only in conversations with those who did not have such experience. With the latter, he talked deliberately longer and put a cross in front of the name of each. Along the way, those sailors who knew Norwegian and Swedish were also identified.

All selected candidates for the future crew were immediately sent on vacation home to deprive them of the opportunity to share guesses and doubts with their friends.

Twenty-three people of the "camouflage" team were dressed in Norwegian-made uniforms. Norwegian books were purchased, Norwegian money was divided. I also had to make sure that all navigational instruments and maps, on various forms and even on pencils, had a Norwegian-made brand. Luckner made sure that there was nothing German on the ship.

Portraits of the king and queen of Norway and even their late father-in-law of the English king Edward VII, who smiled slyly from the bulkhead, were hung in the officer's mess-company. On the sofas were Norwegian cushions embroidered with the national coat of arms. The pillows were handmade - a product of folk crafts. Luckner even made sure that there were letters in Norwegian on the ship addressed to him and other members of the crew, business and family.

It was also necessary to reckon with the fact that the sailing ship would arouse such suspicion of the British that they would land a prize crew on it in order not only to check the documents and search the ship, but also carefully check the entire crew. The checking officer could demand from the captain of the schooner the documents of a particular sailor, starting to ask him about the place where

he was born and raised, like the name of the burgomaster of this city or village, on which ship this sailor sailed three years ago, where exactly, etc. I had to take a lot of photographs of sailors, putting stamps of Norwegian ateliers on them, to come up with their own legend for each, parents, wives, children and brides.

With fake letters, too, was not so easy. The postage stamps on them must be canceled with the stamps of Hong Kong, Honolulu, Singapore, Yokohama, in a word, the whole world, where the addressee has been in his time, where he wrote from and where he received letters.

In the Norwegian ship's role, all sailors were included as members of the Maletta's crew. It also indicated which ships they sailed before. For old sailors who had sailed for fifteen or twenty years, they had to invent a new life.

Everything was finally done, and it only remained to come up with a new name for the sailboat, which was supposed to act in an unprecedented role for itself as an auxiliary Cruiser. At first, Luckner wanted to name the ship "Albatross", in memory of the albatross that once saved his life. But this name was already worn by a minelayer who died in battle off the coast of Sweden. As a result, Luckner decided to name his ship Seeadler (Orlan). The team was called back from holidays, they conducted sea trials on the Weser River, and that was the end of the preparation.

V

On a dark November night, the Seeadler left the mouth of the Weser and anchored in the German Sea.

Meanwhile, in a secluded place in Wilhelmshaven, Luckner gathered his sailors. It was completely dark. Lighting up the Bat with his lantern, Count Luckner checked his men. All were assembled. Putting everyone in a steam launch, Luckner took them to the schooner.

None of the sailors knew where and why he was going. Many suspected that the boat was going to Heligoland, but he was soon left behind, and the open sea was foaming ahead. Finally, in the darkness, the silhouette of the Seeadler began to emerge, and the boat headed towards it. Silent, hushed, the sailors boarded the sailboat.

Lieutenant Commander Felix Luckner had every reason to be pleased with the work done in such a short time. In addition to sails, Seeadler had an auxiliary diesel engine. The crew quarters were simply superb, as it was not out of the question that the sailors would have to live on board for several years. Instead of hanging hammocks, everyone had bunks, and a wardroom was equipped for non-commissioned officers. The "Norwegian" team was placed in the bow of the vessel under the forecabin, in the cockpit. Among other things, each of them was issued a civilian suit for going ashore in foreign ports.

To get to that part of the lower deck where the German team was located, it was necessary first to go through a secret door in the closet, and then through camouflaged hatches. These hatches were cut into the deck under the chests with storm uniforms, mops, goliks, etc. The chests were large, and, if necessary, six or seven people could hide in them, able to immediately jump out to the upper deck.

All military equipment and two old cannons were hidden in the holds. Having given the sailors the minimum time to look around on the ship, Luckner gave the command: "All up! Drop anchor!"



Having gone out to sea, Luckner led the Seeadler to the island of Sylt, in the bay of which he stood for eight days, completing all the last work and finally explaining to his sailors the goals and objectives of the upcoming raid.

A timber was loaded onto the upper deck, located in such a way as to make it extremely difficult to access the interior of the vessel.

In the masts, above the deck, secret doors were made, behind which rifles, Mausers, hand grenades, as well as elements of the naval uniform - caps and pea coats, lay in hollowed-out voids. The doors opened inwards with the help of a secret spring, and were completely invisible from the outside.

Having checked with the "Norwegians" the knowledge of their new names, places of birth and relatives, Luckner handed out "letters from relatives" to everyone, and could consider the preparation completed. He had only to wait for a favorable wind to move on.

At that moment, a radiogram was brought to Luckner, instructing him to wait for the return of the commercial submarine Deutschland, which the British were trying to intercept on their way back from CIIIA, and therefore increased the blockade of German ports from the sea.

The agonizing wait at anchor began. Days passed, and then weeks. During this time, the "Maletta", the similarity with which Luckner so carefully sought, left Copenhagen. The whole plan fell apart. Luckner hoped to go to sea a day earlier than the Maletta, so that the English guards who intercepted him could, by requesting Copenhagen, make sure that the Maletta was really at sea.

Radio devilishly complicated the actions of the corsairs! I had to dig again in the Lloyd's Register, looking for a new schooner, similar to the Seeadler. Such a schooner was found - it turned out to be another Norwegian commercial schooner Karmoe. Now it was necessary to redo the ship's documents, that is, to change the name of the shipowner, the place and time of construction of the schooner, its parameters and characteristics, the insurance category and much more. Moreover, no erasures and corrections were allowed. In addition, it was not known exactly where this very "Carmoe" is now located. Digging through the newspapers taken on the Seeadler for props, Luckner, to his horror, discovered that the schooner Carmoe had been taken by the British to Kirkval for inspection. Luckner felt himself falling into despair. It was already impossible to get new documents, since the Seeadler had no connection with the coast. In the end, Luckner spat and named the schooner "Irma". That was the name of his beloved woman. "The register of love," decided the commander of the Seeadler, "is more reliable than Lloyd's." He erased the name "Carmoe" and wrote "Irma", leaving all other data unchanged. But the double erasure of the name was frankly striking - all the letters were blurry. The inventive Luckner, with the help of a ship's carpenter, simulated such storm damage in the cabin that no one would have doubted that, having broken the portholes, the waves swept over the room, soaking everything to the skin, including the ship's documents. The British could not explain anything - the broken portholes and the water in the cabin spoke for themselves.

The wait for permission to leave was painfully long, and only on December 19, 1916, a destroyer approached the Seeadler, from which a sealed package was handed over to Luckner. The package contained the order: "Go to sea at your own discretion."

It remained to wait for the southwest wind.

On December 20, all rigging, sails and spars were again checked on the schooner. On the twenty-first of December a light south-westerly wind blew. Once again, everyone was examined, the engine was warmed up, the steering wheel was tested, and Luckner ordered to weigh anchor. Seeadler, under the engine, passed a narrow strait between the island and the mainland and, having gone out to the open sea, raised the sails.

The weather was cloudy and chilly, there was a slight swell in the sea. Raising all 2600 sq. meters of sails, Seeadler passed at full speed along the German coast, passing the advanced outposts of the outposts of the German fleet. By ten o'clock in the evening the schooner was abeam Horn Reef, a lightship forty miles west of the Danish coast. Luckner then sailed the sailboat along the Danish coast to reach the exit of the Skagerrak by eight in the morning, giving the enemy the impression that he had indeed left a neutral port.

Suddenly the wind turned sharply to the north, preventing the Seeadler from following her course. It was impossible to go forward, Luckner did not want to return, there was a coast on the starboard side, and minefields on the left.

The best wisdom is making the most dangerous decision. And Luckner decided to follow through the minefields, commanding: "Left aboard!"

The entire team was called upstairs with orders to put on life belts. But luck - the old girlfriend of Felix Luckner - did not fail him this time either. Seeadler safely passed between two rows of mines and went out to sea.

The wind began to pick up. The instructions demanded to stay close to the Norwegian coast, but Luckner led the Seeadler straight to the coast of England.

They say that on December 23, 1916, a storm broke out off the coast of Germany, which had no analogue in history. The storm quickly turned into a hurricane and continued to gain fury.

Having ordered all the sails to be reefed, Luckner realized that fate was giving him a chance to really test his sailboat in the most severe storm, which, moreover, contributed to breaking through all the lines of the English blockade. Raising the storm sails, the Seeadler rushed forward. At the same time, the ship had such a strong roll that the entire leeward side was in the water. It was possible to move around the deck only by holding on to the storm lines with both hands. Everything bent and creaked, and the masts seemed ready to collapse onto the deck at any moment. The whole ship shook from the impact of the waves. From Luckner's point of view, the risk posed by the storm was well worth it. This storm could generally be considered a Gift from Heaven, since it represented an excellent opportunity to break through all the lines of British patrols. From Luckner's point of view, even the loss of all sails and rigging under a gale-force wind would be less terrible than an enemy checking the cleaned documents of a schooner.

Driven by the storm, the Seeadler was rushing at a speed of fifteen knots. A gale-force wind howled in the rigging. Sheets burst at the upper sails, the canvas was torn off the luffs, and before it was possible to fix the sail, it was torn to shreds and blown high into the sky by the wind. At 23:00 the first line of the English blockade was passed. From the Seeadler's bridge, Luckner and the watch peered into the darkness with binoculars, trying to spot enemy patrol ships in time. But not a single ship was in sight. Apparently, having received a storm warning, the British preferred to shelter their ships in safe bays, hoping that the Germans would do the same ...

Standing on the bridge of his raider, Luckner truly enjoyed the violence of the elements. Under the engine and sails, Seeadler, like a devil, flew over the waves. The storm grew stronger, the foremast, shrouds and braces groaned and trembled like stretched strings, ready to burst at any moment...

As befits a neutral ship, the Seeadler sailed with distinctive lights. Waves roared in from the stern, flooding the entire deck, cascading over the leeward side into the sea. Both helmsmen were tied to the helm.

Possessed by that unknown force that, as a teenager, snatched him from his father's count's estate, far from any sea, and threw him on the deck of obsolete sailing schooners, dragging him through incredible adventures, Count Felix Luckner found this picture marvelous and delightful!

Every four hours the Seeadler passed a degree of latitude. With a chronometer in hand, Luckner calculated: one blockade line had been passed, now they had already passed the next, and by midnight they should reach the main guard curtain between Shetland and Bergen.

The English did not show up.

An interesting blockade, Luckner thought, supported by nothing but declarations.

Luckner decided to gain a few miles and go straight between Shetland and Orkney, but just as he was about to take his chosen course, the wind went eight points to the west-north-west, and the Seeadler began to drift north towards Iceland.

It was impossible to do anything. It remained only, obeying the wind, to go further and further north. Luckner decided that it was better to get stuck in the ice than to return to the Shetland Islands, to the line of British patrols, or to be near Kirkval himself, where the British brought all the commercial ships detained for inspection.

Leaving the Gulf Stream zone, the Seeadler fell into a severe frost. The day in these latitudes lasted only half an hour. At eleven o'clock the sun appeared over the horizon, and at half past twelve it was already disappearing. The ship is icy. The entire bow of the schooner was covered with ice, and the icy gear did not pass through the blocks. The lower sails hardened like wood. Secret hatches froze, and most of the crew was cut off from their cockpits. The bow of the schooner turned into a block of ice, and those who lived under the forecastle could not get into their cockpits either.

For four days everyone lived on the upper deck, which was so icy that it became completely impossible to stay on one's feet. The fingers did not straighten, the lips were literally ossified from the cold. Nobody slept, of course. The forces were supported in the old pirate way - grog. Everyone from time to time went to the galley and received a glass of this life-giving moisture, drank it in one gulp and immediately came to life, thanks to an unknown navigator who invented this drink, capable of resurrecting even the dead. No wonder sailors of all countries called the grog "icebreaker".

The ship was left to its own devices, since not a single gear worked. Seeadler drifted, and his crew turned into a crowd of helpless passengers, completely dependent on the will of the elements. Luckner hoped the wind would soon shift to the north. So, fortunately, it happened. The raider turned south. With the help of crowbars and axes, the team gradually freed itself from the ice, and the sailboat became controllable again.

Having set all the sails, Luckner sent the Seeadler into the passage between the Faroe Islands.

On Christmas Day 1916, the Seeadler was in a state of excitement. It seemed that all the main difficulties were overcome: the blockade was broken, the ice and severe frosts were left behind, and the vast expanses of the Atlantic lay ahead, open for combat activities against enemy shipping.

Such a rosy mood was interrupted by the cry of the signalman from the "crow's nest" on the mast: "Unknown ship astern!"

It was 09:30 on December 25, 1916.

In these places, the "unknown ship" could only be an English patrol cruiser!

Luckner jumped up and quickly became convinced that a large enemy auxiliary cruiser was approaching the Seeadler.

Cursing the fate that had changed him, Luckner ordered the crew to act according to a long-established camouflage plan. This meant that all non-Norwegians, in the form of German sailors, with weapons in their hands, should hide below decks.

Explosive charges were placed in the bow and stern magazines of ammunition, as well as in the diesel compartment. Having gathered the team, Luckner addressed them with a short speech:

"We," said the commander of the Seeadler, "passed through the minefields, withstood the most severe storm and avoided death in the ice. Now we have another test. Everyone stay calm and don't panic! The first watch is in bed, the second watch is up! The fewer people on the upper deck, the better. On the upper deck, no one staggers around idle! Self-control and pure Norwegian composure!

On the approaching cruiser, a signal fluttered through the international code. Luckner ordered to delay the answer. On a Norwegian schooner there might not have been any good signalmen or powerful binoculars.

In his cabin, Luckner began to prepare to receive the British, dousing everything again with water, hanging his underpants to dry, and spreading out the wet ship's papers.

One sailor of a fragile physique was dressed as a woman who had the code name "Jeanette". The English are generally very gallant and so well-bred that they cannot imagine a woman on a warship. And, if the captain takes his wife on board, then, of course, he is sure that his ship is not in danger of any trouble, and even more so - danger. It was customary for Norwegian skippers to take their wives with them on board, in accordance with the ancient tradition of the Vikings.

An eighteen-year-old sailor with a pretty face was specially selected for this purpose in the crew of the Seeadler. A whole wardrobe of women's dresses and a light wig were prepared for him.

"Jeanette" was quickly "equipped", smeared with rouge and laid on the couch, covering her legs with a blanket. One of the two dogs that were on board was placed nearby. Luckner examined his "wife" and found that she looked beautiful. But since the young sailor, for all his good looks, still spoke in a man's voice, Luckner's "wife" was forced to suffer from "flux". A piece of cotton wool was put on the sailor's cheek, and a shawl was wrapped around his head. In this state, it is difficult to speak, and the expression on the face of the poor boy turned out to be really suffering. "Jeanette" "armed" already at times. "Her" photograph hung on the bulkhead of Luckner's cabin and was decorated with an inscription in Norwegian: "Many bows - Your Dagmara. 1914" The hope was that, by looking at the portrait, the English officer would save the "Jeanette" from all sorts of indiscreet questions.

The roar of a shell that exploded nearby forced Luckner to interrupt the preparation of his cabin for inspection and urgently jump out upstairs. The English cruiser, tired of waiting for an answer to his signal, fired a warning shell under the Seeadler's nose.

Now the cruiser's signal was clearly visible, and it was impossible not to understand it.

Seeadler slowly turned towards the cruiser, on the bow of which was already unarmed

eye read the name "Evinj". All his guns were aimed at the schooner. The English officers standing on the bridge examined the sailboat through binoculars. Voice through the microphone ordered: "Get ready for inspection!"

Luckner began to fear that the British had received intelligence information about the Seeadler? Why do they keep an innocent schooner at gunpoint? He went down to the cabin and, in order to calm his excitement, drank a glass of cognac in one gulp. Having chewed it with tobacco, Luckner, having somewhat calmed down, again went upstairs. All the old captains were famous for their fondness for chewing tobacco, traces of which constantly adorned their beards. Coming out on deck, Luckner and all his sailors ordered to take a sip of cognac, not to worry, but to boldly look at the British from under the Norwegian mask with German eyes.

"But I," Luckner finished, "will play the role of the old seasoned captain.

In the wardroom, a bottle of whiskey and a gramophone were placed on the table, playing a popular English tune. With the help of whiskey and a gramophone, Luckner hoped to weaken the vigilance of the British. That they would immediately go to the wardroom, Luckner had no doubt.

A boat rolled away from the cruiser, in which were two officers and fifteen sailors armed with rifles. When the boat approached the side of the Seeadler, Luckner burst into a long curse in Norwegian, urging his sailors to move faster, feeding the ends to the boat. It was important that the British, while still in the boat, heard the Norwegian language.

The officer who came up on deck asked in English:

- Who is the captain?

"I am the captain, Your Honor," Luckner replied, making it clear at once that he did not consider himself in any way equal to an English officer, and therefore did not use the usual expression "herr officer." In the eyes of a simple person, an officer is always "Your Honor".

- Merry Christmas, Captain! the Englishman greeted Luckner.

"Oh, Your Honor," Luckner sighed. "If you come down to my cabin, you will see how happy Christmas was for us!"

- Did you get caught in a storm? inquired the English officer sympathetically.

"They took a sip of goryushka," Luckner confirmed.

"Poor fellow," said the Englishman sympathetically. — And we took refuge behind the islands.

We know that, Luckner gloated mentally. "That's why none of you were at sea."

The second officer greeted Luckner with a handshake, and the three of them went down to the captain's cabin. Even from behind the doors, the British heard their favorite song "Long Way to Tipperary", smiled and even began to sing along. The atmosphere was filled with mutual sympathy.

In the cabin, the British had to constantly bend over because of the linen hanging everywhere, but, nevertheless, they quickly noticed the Jeanette.

"Your wife, captain?" - asked the English officer - the commander of the prize party.

"My wife, your honor," Luckner confirmed.

"Sorry to disturb you," the officer said to Jeannette. But we are only doing our duty.

"Jeanette" sang the memorized "Ol Rait" in a nasal voice, and the officer at that time noticed the broken portholes in the cabin.

- Yes, you got it! he said, looking sympathetically at Luckner.

"All right," Luckner waved his hand in embarrassment.

"Don't worry about it, your honor. My carpenter will fix everything. Too bad, only that all my papers got wet.

"That's understandable," agreed the officer. - If a wave walked through the cabin, how could they stay dry?

"You are a man of understanding, Your Honor," Luckner bowed. "And someone else will appear and pick on me." He will say that the papers should serve as long as the ship itself.

"I'll write you a certificate," the Englishman promised. "You should be glad, skipper, that your schooner wasn't smashed to pieces at all.

"I will pray to God for you, Your Honor," Luckner bowed again. - If you write me such a certificate.

The English officer took out a notebook from his pocket, in which he listed all the ship's papers to be checked. It was felt that he had already examined quite a few ships, noting everything suspicious in the book. He opened a blank page and wrote down the name of the schooner - "Irma".

The second officer at that time admired the portrait of King Edward VII and with a respectful look compared the photograph of the captain's wife with the original lying on the couch. On the upper deck, the laughter of English sailors was heard, who were treated to whiskey. The gramophone played "Long Way to Tipperary" non-stop. Meanwhile, Luckner presented the commander of the prize team one paper after another. Barely deigning to look at them, the Englishman nodded his head, repeating: "Good, good, captain." And Luckner bowed and said: "Here you are, Your Honor, and this one."

The English officer did not imagine that he was literally sitting on bayonets - below deck, in full combat readiness, a team that did not speak Norwegian was waiting for a signal.

Next to Luckner stood his adjutant, Second Lieutenant Pierce, who played the role of the first navigator of the schooner. His gigantic figure and blond head were quite consistent with the general idea of \u200b\u200bScandinavian sailors.

- Where are your documents for the cargo? the Englishman inquired.

The navigator, slowly, went out and brought the necessary documents. The shipping papers, one might say, were the only ones where there were no purges. The consignment was marked in detail and accompanied by a certificate that it was destined for a consignee in Australia. At the bottom was signed: "Jack Johnson, British Vice Consul."

"Captain," the Englishman rose from his chair. All your papers are in perfect order.

Luckner began to profuse gratitude, but then he was terribly sick from excessive use of chewing tobacco. Overcoming a bout of nausea, Luckner feared the British would notice. Can an experienced Norwegian skipper be seasick? Meanwhile, an English officer demanded a logbook.

The "Navigator" brought it, and the Englishman, looking through the magazine, was very surprised that the schooner had stood still for three weeks.

It was necessary to say something, but Luckner's urge to vomit was such that he was afraid to open his mouth.

"And yet," the English officer continued to inquire. - Why did you have a downtime for three weeks?

It's all over now, Luckner thought horrified, chewing the tobacco rushing out of his stomach with a last effort. Rescued "navigator" Pierce.

"We were warned by the shipowner to refrain from going to sea," Pierce informed the officer. "According to him, there were German auxiliary cruisers at sea.

— German auxiliary cruisers? the Englishman perked up. - Do you know anything about them?

'Of course,' replied Luckner, who felt a little better, 'there are the Mewe, the Seeadler, and at least fifteen U-boats at sea. So we were assured by the shipowner.

The second English officer suddenly looked at his watch and said to his colleague:

"That's all well and good, but we don't have time anymore. We need to hurry.

The commander of the prize team, who was looking through the documents, slammed the book shut and said to Luckner:

- All right, captain. All your papers are in order, but you will have to wait an hour or an hour and a half. Wait for the signal to be raised that you may proceed.

Everyone went up to the upper deck, and the British began to descend into the boat. Taking advantage of the moment, Luckner "etched" chewing tobacco overboard and, as it were, was born again. He, however, did not like the instruction to wait "an hour or an hour and a half." The sailors, having learned about this installation, completely lost heart and came to the conclusion that it was all over, they were exposed. Some expressed this opinion so loudly that they were heard below deck by sailors who did not speak Norwegian. They listened intently to everything that was going on upstairs. Hearing exclamations of "it's over," they ignited the fuses of demolition charges, designed to burn for seven minutes. And on the upper deck, no one suspected that the ship was ready to take off. Everyone went joyful that the inspection went so well. In parting, the English officer shook Luckner's hand and repeated:

"So, captain, you will wait for a signal from the cruiser, after which you can proceed further.

Luckner's senior assistant, Lieutenant Kling, who knew about three dozen Norwegian words, successfully combining them, gave the sailors the order to set sail. But the corsairs were waiting for a new trouble. A sailboat, unlike a steamboat, cannot be completely stopped without releasing the anchor. He will always move. Because of this, the boat with the British was pressed to the side and began to be demolished to the stern. Going astern, the British could notice

propeller, and this circumstance could betray the Germans with their heads. There was not a word in the ship's documents that the sailboat was equipped with a diesel engine with a capacity of a thousand horsepower.  
forces.

Luckner, not fully aware of his actions, but obeying some unknown instinct, rushed to the stern, grabbed a cable that fell under his arm and, waving it over the head of the British, shouted: "Accept this end, your honor!"

The goal was to force the enemy sailors, over whose heads the end walked, to look up so as not to get hit on the head, and not to look at the stern of the schooner, where they could notice the screw.

The officer once again thanked Luckner for his readiness to help, and the boat finally moved away from the side of the Seeadler and headed for the cruiser. With a sigh of relief, Luckner began to descend, wanting to quickly inform the sailors below deck that the danger had passed. Knocking with the heel of his boot on the "secret" hatch, Luckner shouted:

— Open!

Nobody downstairs answered him.

— Open! Luckner shouted again, drumming his foot on the hatch.

Suddenly, the commander of the Seeadler heard a cry from under the deck:

— Open kingstones and clinkets!

Not understanding what had happened, Luckner thought for a moment that down there everyone was crazy from overexertion and yelled at the top of his lungs:

— Open! Everything is fine!

The hatch slowly opened and a deathly pale face appeared from there, which immediately disappeared. Downstairs, running around, screaming, screaming began, which completely confused Luckner. It turned out that everyone rushed to close the kingstones and put out the fuses, which had only three minutes to burn.

This incident greatly upset Luckner, as it showed how misunderstood words, confusion, and panic can thwart the best plan. They found the sailor who was the first to exclaim "It's all over." He justified himself that this exclamation escaped him when it became known that the Seeadler should still stand in place for "an hour and a half." During this time, the British will ask by radio Kirkval whether the schooner Irma is at sea, and find out that there is no Irma at all.

It was hard to reply to that. The schooner had a radio station, the antenna of which was disguised in the rigging. Luckner ordered to listen to the broadcast, and he climbed to the bridge with a signal vault and binoculars, trying not to miss the signal from the cruiser. Minutes ticked by that felt like hours.

Finally, on the mast of the English cruiser, a three-flag signal slowly crept up. From excitement, they read it incorrectly - "T.M.V.", which, according to the signal vault, meant "Planet". Complete nonsense! Finally figured out that the cruiser raised the signal "T.X.V." "Keep swimming."

Everyone began to happily hug and shake hands, congratulating each other on their success.

The enemy cruiser passed by the schooner, holding the guns along the march. On his gaff



the signal fluttered: "Happy sailing!"

On the Seeadler they saluted the Norwegian flag three times and also wished the cruiser happy sailing.

As soon as the English cruiser was out of sight, Luckner ordered the entire cargo of timber to be thrown overboard. The sailors, exhausted from previous sleepless nights and the hassle that had just ended with the inspection of the schooner, nevertheless enthusiastically set to work. The deck was cleared, the gun was lifted from the hold, set in place and a test shot was fired.

Soon the north wind began to pick up, and the Seeadler, with all her sails up, flew south, while Luckner was still enjoying a recent visit to the schooner by the English prize crew. He had a plan of action in case the British recognized the Irma as suspicious and took her to Kirkval or some other English port for a more thorough examination. If that were to happen, Luckner hoped to recapture the ship from the prize crew with "minimal bloodshed".

The prize team would probably have settled in the wardroom, leaving six or seven people on deck to supervise the "Norwegian team".

The wardroom on the Seeadler was a large wooden container not connected to the ship's hull, which could be lowered down like an elevator cabin using a hydraulic system. Luckner, after waiting for the departure of the English cruiser, had to give a conditional command: "Remove topsail, stay on course!"

At the same moment, the sailors of the "Norwegian team", having taken out weapons from caches in the masts, had to disarm the enemy sailors who were on the upper deck. The wardroom was lowered into the hold, where the British who were in it fell into the hands of a team that did not speak Norwegian. That was the plan, except for one circumstance - the hydraulic system that was supposed to lower the wardroom into the hold existed only in Luckner's head. So it's good that you didn't have to use such tricks!

## VI

Leaning forward a ridge of snow-white sails, the Seeadler went to the island of Madera. The diesel engine launched to help the sails constantly jammed.

The sailboat always rolls to one side, and this leads to uneven wear of the piston rings. But Luckner blamed the bad engine oil issued to the Seeadler for everything. The oil has already been in use more than once, since in Germany there was already an acute shortage of lubricants, as, indeed, of all others. The idea of sending the Seeadler on the raid as an auxiliary cruiser had the support of a very small number of people in the Naval General Staff. Most considered it a waste of time and a waste of precious funds. This also applied to weapons. It was assumed that Luckner would only attack sailboats. As a result, only two old 105-mm guns were allocated to the Seeadler, of which only one turned out to be serviceable. Therefore, it remained only to hope for improvisation and "military cunning".

The signalmen who were the first to notice any ship were entitled to a bonus - a bottle of champagne. Soon it had to be handed over.

On January 11, 1917, when the Seeadler was approximately at the latitude of Gibraltar, a steamer was discovered on the port side. Everyone was seized by fighting excitement, although it was forbidden for the Seeadler to attack the ships. But you can't blindly obey everything that the authorities forbid!

"Such is the imperfect nature of man," Luckner philosophized, "always promising more than you can deliver."

A signal was raised on the Seeadler: "Please report the chronometer readings." Sailboats, as a rule, do not have an exact time when they stay at sea for a long time. The Seeadler sailed under the Norwegian flag. All those on the upper deck were dressed in civilian clothes. Armed sailors in uniform hid behind the bulwarks.

The steamer raised the signal "I see clearly" and began to approach the schooner. Luckner tried to determine if it was an English steamer. There was no name on the bow (with the outbreak of war, all English merchant ships became nameless), but, apparently, the steamer was still English.

- Are we attacking? Luckner asked his team.

- Let's attack! the sailors answered in unison.

- Prepare for battle! Luckner ordered.

There was a crackle of drumming, the half-portico that hid the gun fell, and the German naval ensign slowly crept up on the mast. As soon as the topmast flag reached the place, a warning shot was fired from the gun. The first combat shot on the enemy!

On the ship, apparently, they did not understand what had happened, since they raised the English flag in response. The Seeadler's cannon fired a second shell under the steamer's nose. He began to turn around with the clear intention of running away. Two more shots had to be fired: one over the pipes, and the second under the nose again, before the steamer stopped the car.

A boat was lowered from the ship, which headed for the Seeadler. The name of the ship turned out to be Gladys Royal, and its captain, a respectable gray-haired sailor, boarded the schooner and began to beg Luckner to spare his old steamer, which was sailing with a cargo of Cardiff coal to neutral Buenos Aires. The captain explained to Luckner that he did not stop at the first shot, because he decided that on the schooner they checked the time in the old, old-fashioned way - by shooting from a small mortar. That's why he raised the English flag to show that the reconciliation will take place not by the shot, but by lowering the flag. At the second shot, everyone noticed a shell explosion and thought that a German submarine had appeared. Only at the third shot, having seen the German flag on the sailboat, did they understand what had happened.

The captain kept begging to be let go.

"Do you think," Luckner asked him, "if the English had caught a German steamer on this very spot, they would have let it go?"

Luckner's iron logic silenced the Englishman.

Luckner ordered the captain to return to his ship along with the Seeadler prize crew, deciding to remove everything of value from the Gladys Royal, especially food. Twenty-six people of the crew of the ship (mainly Indians and Negroes) were transported to the Seeadler, and the ship entered the sailing ship in its wake. Only with the onset

of darkness, the Gladys Royal was sunk by subversive rounds. We had to reckon with the fact that British cruisers could be nearby. The ship sank within ten minutes.

The English captain was very surprised to see what a cozy cabin he was given, but upset that he was the first "guest" on the German raider. Luckner reassured him by promising to create something like a club of famous captains on board in the near future. The boatswain was delighted with the captured sailors, immediately sending them to clean up the middle deck ...

Everything indicated that the Seeadler was in a good area, and Luckner continued to head for Madera. The next day, signalmen found a steamer heading for the intersection of the Seeadler's course.

The ship did not respond to the sailboat's signals. Luckner ordered the engine to be started and began to approach the steamer himself. Having approached him about three hundred meters and making sure that he was an "Englishman", Luckner ordered the raising of the naval ensign and fired a warning shot. The ship, without reacting, continued to leave at full speed, turning into the wind, correctly believing that the sailboat would not be able to go against the wind.

Luckner orders to open rapid fire. Several shells hit the steamer, and at last it came to a halt, piercingly wailing like a siren.

The steamer was called Landy Island. He went from Madagascar to England with a cargo of 4,500 tons of sugar. The sailors began to lower the boats in a panic, the captain remained alone on the bridge, trying in vain to do something. The car was stopped, the steering gear was killed by a shell, there was nothing to do, and the captain was also forced to go down into the boat and head for the Seeadler.

The captain's last name was Burton. Not so long ago, he had already lost his ship, sunk by the German auxiliary cruiser Meve. It was his first voyage since his release from the Meve, and the Englishman had every reason to fear that Luckner would order him to be hanged on a yardarm, since, upon his release, he had given a subscription not to participate in hostilities any more. That's why he tried to run.

Luckner reassured Burton by assuring him that the subscription he had given was only for the conduct of hostilities and not for the command of a civilian steamship. This cannot be blamed on him. On the contrary, he, Luckner, admires the courage of the English captain.

The weather was fresh, and therefore Landy Island was not blown up, but sent to the bottom by artillery fire.

Thus, Luckner's first prisoner, Captain Chuin, did not remain alone for long, and the crews of both ships quickly became friends. A couple of days later, the Seeadler's signalers found a sailing ship approaching the Seeadler. It was a large three-masted barque: Proudly raising the tricolor flag, the barque asked the Seeadler: "What news of the war?"

Luckner ordered the German flag to be hoisted and signaled to the barge: "Bring it hard to the wind!"

Bark immediately complied with the order. The boat with the prize crew rolled away from the Seeadler.

The sailing ship turned out to be French with the poetic name "Charles Gounod", sailing from Durban with a cargo of maize. His captain made a good impression on Luckner, because he did not play up and did not humiliate himself, behaved correctly, but made it clear to the Seeadler commander that he saw him as an enemy.

From the "Charles Gounod" they reloaded all the food, including a large amount of red wine and three fat pigs, and the sailboat itself was blown up. Meanwhile, Luckner was leading the Seeadler to the area that he considered the main one in his corsair activities. This region was five degrees north of the equator and thirty degrees west longitude. All sailing ships leaving the southeast trade wind zone and heading north had to pass through this area.

The first to fall into the Seeadler's clutches was an English schooner, on which the captain was on his honeymoon trip. Luckner initially thought it was an American sailboat. The Americans loved such three-masted schooners with slanting sails. And since the state of war with America was not yet, Luckner wanted to pass by, remaining under the Norwegian flag. He simply saluted the schooner with a flag salute, hoping that she would show her nationality. The schooner did not answer. Knowing how little Americans take into account international maritime laws, Luckner wanted to spit on this "ignoramus" and go his own way, but, as it turned out later, the young wife persuaded the English captain not to be so impolite and to return the greeting. The captain agreed and raised the flag.

"This is not an American," Luckner heard the signalman shout from Mars, "he raised the English flag!"

"Right aboard," commanded Luckner, "raise the German flag!"

The Seeadler hoisted a flag signal to halt. This signal made no impression on the schooner.

- Shot under the nose! Luckner ordered.

Again, no impression.

Only after the second shot did the schooner stop. She turned out to be the Canadian sailing ship Perseus. Even on the approach to the Perseus, Luckner noticed through binoculars on the deck of the Perseus a woman who rushed about in fear. This did not please the Seeadler commander at all. The last thing he wanted was to have the fair sex on board. Later, however, Luckner had to admit that this young woman, with her easy-going, cheerful nature, brought a pleasant change to life aboard the Seeadler.

Operating in the area chosen by Luckner, Seeadler sank one ship after another. The fame of his actions spread along both sides of the Atlantic. The sailboat was nicknamed "Monkfish". When Luckner found out about this, he liked the name very much, and so did the crew. But officially, Luckner's sailboat was always called the Seeadler, although Luckner himself began to call it the Monkfish more often.

Meanwhile, Luckner, having sunk the Canadian schooner Perseus on January 28, headed northwest. Soon, from the "crow's nest" on the mast, they reported that they saw smoke astern. Behind the smoke appeared a large steamship, going at full speed. Luckner raised the signal, asking for a chronometer reading. The ship did not respond to this signal. His captain, apparently, decided not to stop because of such a trifle. But the inventive Luckner came up with a new way to draw attention to himself. A so-called "smoke apparatus" was built on the Seeadler, imitating a fire on a ship. He let out clubs of black smoke with flames from magnesia. Seeing the smoke, the ship changed course and began to approach the Seeadler. Luckner gave the order to prepare for battle, and thirty armed sailors took cover behind the bulwark. The entire watch on the bridge was dressed in civilian clothes. Sailors with megaphones were sent to the brom-bram-rei foresail, mainsail and mizzen masts. The sailboat continued flying under the Norwegian flag, luring the steamer closer.

When the ship came abeam the Seeadler, its fat captain shouted into a megaphone:

"What happened to you?"

Instead of answering, the Seeadler's masts are hoisted with a naval ensign and a red pennant of marque. The Seeadler was the only ship that sailed under a pirate pennant during the First World War.

The pennant was a red flag, which had an image of a skull and crossbones in the roof.

Armed sailors jumped out from behind the bulwark and began to belligerently brandish rifles.

An unprecedented panic broke out on the ship. Everyone shouted in horror: "Germans! Germans!" The machinists and stokers, leaving their posts in the car, jumped out and rushed to the lifeboats, near which there was a terrible crush. The unexpected transformation of a harmless sailing ship into an auxiliary cruiser filled everyone with horror.

A shot rang out from the Seeadler, knocking the radio antenna off the ship's mast. The captain was still giving commands in a thunderous voice and pulling the handles of the engine telegraph. But everything was in vain, because there was no one in the engine room.

Luckner did not know whether the ship was armed or not. Among the sailors running around its deck, there could well be gunners running to the gun.

In order to paralyze everyone with fear even more, the sailors sent to the masts with megaphones began to give commands:

"Prepare torpedoes!"

In response, all who were on the ship screamed in despair:

- No need for torpedoes, no need for torpedoes!

The sailors began waving white sheets, tablecloths, towels. Even the cook began waving his white apron.

- Stay where you are! Luckner roared into the megaphone. "Otherwise we'll launch torpedoes!"

The boat with the prize crew left the Seeadler and headed for the steamer hung with white flags.

The prize was amazing! Expensive jewelry, fine carpets, antique armchairs, an expensive piano and harmonium were transported to the Seeadler. To this were added two thousand cases of champagne and five hundred cases of cognac found on the ship. Having ferried the ship's crew and cargo to the Seeadler, Luckner ordered the ship to be sent to the bottom.

The unfortunate captain of the ship, looking around at the Seeadler, asked Luckner:

"Commander, is this old cannon all you have?"

"And she shoots every other time," Luckner admitted.

— Where are your torpedo tubes? asked the Englishman.

— Torpedo tubes? Luckner laughed. We don't have torpedo tubes or torpedoes. But we have invented special aerial torpedoes that are fired by voice through megaphones. You have seen that they are also a formidable weapon!

The English captain's face turned red.

"You don't have torpedoes," he whispered in utter desperation, turned purple, and then turned pale, like a canvas.

"I beg you, Commander, not to tell anyone about this," he told Luckner.

Luckner promised.

## VII

The Seeadler continued south under full sail. It was a beautiful tropical night. In the wardroom, Luckner drank champagne in the company of "jolly pirates". A myriad of stars sparkled in the sky, a silver moon path ran across the ocean, the waves crashed softly against the stem. An orchestra played on the middle deck - cello, violin, harmonium and piano, performing the popular song: "Blow, beautiful south wind!"

No one knew what the sailing ship was waiting for tomorrow with its insignificant armament. But for now, everyone was enjoying the beauty of the tropical night. Such a relaxed state was suddenly broken by the cry of the signalman:

— Fire from the starboard side!

Leaving their unfinished glasses, Luckner and Lieutenant Kling jumped out onto the bridge, and in the moonlight they saw a three-masted sailing ship on the horizon. Since the Seeadler was in the dark part of the horizon, and it was difficult to identify it from an unknown sailing ship, Luckner decided to impersonate a "big German cruiser", which he signaled to the sailing ship, ordering  
stay.

The sailboat stopped, but did not respond to signals. It turned out that he sent a boat to the Seeadler, which suddenly emerged from the darkness at the very side of the raider, and they shouted from it:

— Captain! I thought it was a Hun cruiser, but I see that you are my brother - the same sailing ship as me. Why did you scare me so? You probably wanted to tell me some news about the war?

An unknown captain climbed the storm ladder onto the deck of the Seeadler and greeted everyone in words:

— Bonjour! I'm French.

- Fabulous! Luckner exclaimed. How are things in France?

"Excellent," replied the Frenchman. - Glad to meet you!

Luckner's offer to go downstairs and drink a bottle of champagne, the French captain accepted with enthusiasm. As he descended the ladder, he clapped Luckner on the shoulder and said:

"However, you are a cruel joker. So play me! Honestly, I was scared to death. Now I feel like a heavy stone has fallen from my heart!

Yes, Luckner thought. "Now this stone will slam you at all!"

The Frenchman entered the wardroom and recoiled in horror at the sight of portraits of Kaiser Wilhelm

and Field Marshal Hindenburg, hanging from the bulkhead in the same places where the King and Queen of Norway once housed with their father-in-law Edward VII. . The French captain sank heavily into a chair and groaned in horror:

- Germans!

He even became smaller and smaller, as if all the air had been let out of him.

"Get a grip on yourself," Luckner advised.

- Don't sag like a frog in a jar. Your ship is not the only one destined to die in this war. I don't know if I'll live to see tomorrow.

But the French captain could not calm down for a long time.

- It's all my own fault! he confessed to Luckner. - I was in Valparaíso with two of my countrymen, captains of French sailing ships. They warned me not to go to sea until an answer came to their telegraphic inquiry as to which course to take in order to avoid encountering German auxiliary cruisers and submarines. And I wanted to use the good weather for a speedy return to my homeland. As a result, I, like the last fool, was captured by you, and my colleagues, returning home, will tell the shipowner that I did not listen to them, and I will never again be entrusted with the command of the ship.

- What were the names of those sailboats with which you stood in Valparaíso? Luckner inquired.

"Antoine," replied the Frenchman.

— "Antoine"? Luckner asked. "He was commanded by Captain Lecoq?"

"Yes," the captive captain admitted, looking at Luckner with fear.

What was the name of the second ship? Luckner continued to ask, pouring champagne into glasses.

"La Rochefoucauld," whispered the unfortunate Frenchman.

- Vestovy! Luckner ordered. "Bring the captains from cabins 7 and 9 here.

The order was quickly carried out, and two more captured captains appeared in the wardroom.

"Let me introduce you," Luckner said to his new prisoner, "the captains of the Antoine and the La Rochefoucauld." One has enjoyed our hospitality for ten days, and the other for three days.

The unfortunate Frenchman immediately revived, jumped to his feet, grabbed a glass of champagne and clinked glasses with a jubilant look with his newfound friends. After drinking, the three French captains, like three musketeers, began to shake hands with each other, embrace and rejoice wildly on the occasion of the meeting. What made them so happy - the meeting itself or the fact that all three were captured - Luckner did not understand. The sailboat, whose name was "Duplex", was sent to the bottom with the help of explosive shells.

On March 17, 1917, from the "crow's nest" on the Seeadler's mainmast, signalmen noticed a large English four-masted barque. Bark tried to flee, but the Seeadler, having started the diesel engine, quickly overtook him. At the request from the raider, the sailboat gave its name - "Pinmore".

And then Luckner recognized him. This was exactly the sailboat on which, under the surname Ludic, he once made a round-the-world voyage, while still being a simple sailor. Sentimentality, so characteristic of all Germans, overwhelmed Felix Luckner. For a moment, he even lost the power of speech and could not say anything to the watchman, who was waiting for his orders. And then he stunned the watchman, announcing that he personally intended to lead the prize team.

On deck, Luckner was met by the captain of the Pinmore, Mullen. He was also surprised to learn that Luckner was willing to take a walk on the ship.

Luckner visited the cockpit where he once lived, examined the captain's saloon, and, having climbed onto the bridge and saw the letters "F.f.L." (Felix von Luckner), the commander of the Seeadler, was so moved that tears flowed down his cheeks. The corsair confessed to Captain Mullen that he sailed in his youth on the Pinmore, and how hard it is for him now to give the order to sink this sailboat.

"Sinking sailboats for me is like stabbing a knife in my own heart," said Luckner. - I know very well that today no one will build a new sailing ship to replace the sunken one.

But war is war, and nothing can be done about it.

Having transported the most valuable cargo and crew to the Seeadler, Luckner gave the order to flood the ship of his youth.

"That's how I thanked you, old man," lamented Luckner, watching the Pinmore sink into the abyss. (After the war, for some reason, Luckner began to assure everyone that he did not sink the Pinmore, but personally brought the sailboat to Rio, where, after loading food and collecting information about the British patrol cruisers, he again went to sea, meeting with the Seeadler at the appointed place rendezvous, after which Pinmore was allegedly sold to South America under a different name, but this version is very doubtful).

Shortly thereafter, another sailboat appeared straight ahead. Seeadler quickly approached him. All the prisoners on board poured onto the upper deck, watching the process of capturing another ship.

The captain of the sailing ship was standing on the bridge next to some young woman (as it turned out later, with his young wife) and, when approaching the Seeadler, he asked into a mouthpiece:

"Do you have any news from the theater of operations?"

"Oh, yes," Luckner replied. - Much news.

- I would love to come to you for a cup of coffee! the captain shouted.

"We invite you for a bottle of whiskey," the generous Luckner offered. So what's new about the war? the captain asked again.

- Just a minute! Luckner asked. "Now find out from the signal.

And ordered to raise the signal "T. D." ("Stop or I'll shoot"). The captain began to dig into the signal book, and when he looked up again, he saw that the German flag was already fluttering on the Seeadler's mast. In surprise, he dropped the binoculars from his hands. The news about the war turned out to be stunning!

Especially when everyone on his sailboat clearly saw the barrel of a gun pointed at them. The helmsman and the captain's wife seemed to be blown off the bridge by the wind, but the captain himself remained on his



post, ordering to bring the ship into the wind.

The prisoners were ecstatic, cheering loudly for all of Luckner's actions. The captain of the sailboat looked with surprise at this motley, multi-tribal rabble, yelling on the deck of the Seeadler, exuberantly expressing their joy. The wife of the Canadian captain, who was taken prisoner during her honeymoon, was especially happy. She realized that she would no longer be the only woman on board the Seeadler.

The sailing ship, whose name was "British Yumeya", was coming from America with a cargo of food. What they could, they overloaded, and the rest was sent to the sharks. On March 21, Luckner captured the French sailing ship Cambronne, sailing from Chile to France with a cargo of nitrates.

From January 21 to March 21, 1917, Luckner captured nine prizes with a total displacement of forty thousand tons. There were already two hundred and sixty-three prisoners on board the Seeadler. In fact, the prisoners would not be very embarrassing to Luckner if they did not need to be fed. They were fed in the same way as the crew of the raider, which eventually led Luckner to the idea that prisoners should be disposed of. The Seeadler commander was especially worried about the consumption of water, on the reserves of which all further actions of the raider depended.

Therefore, Luckner decided to transfer all the prisoners to the captured Cambron barque and send them to Rio de Janeiro.

Luckner knew he was taking a big risk. From the words of the prisoners, the enemy could learn a lot about him. And since Luckner planned to move to the Pacific Ocean and continue the cruising war there, it was necessary to gain time and not allow the Cambron to come too quickly to Rio. All the topmasts were cut from the barge so that she could only sail under lower sails, which prevented her from reaching Rio before fourteen days. For this purpose, the bowsprit was also cut down on the Cambrone.

The captain of the Cambron, when he learned that his sailing ship would not be sunk, but would go with the prisoners to Rio de Janeiro, even breathless with joy. He was unable to utter a word.

For the captured captains, Luckner arranged a dump in the wardroom, and they parted on best friends. As the captain of the Cambron, Luckner appointed Mullen from the Pinmore as the most experienced. The English flag was raised on the barge, which offended the French a little.

When the Seeadler began to move south, the former prisoners, huddled at the bulwark of the Pinmore, shouted "Hurrah!" and waved to Luckner.

Such are the paradoxes of human psychology and behavior. All this, however, as Luckner assumed, did not prevent the prisoners, upon arrival in Rio de Janeiro, from informing the British in detail about the actions and alleged plans of the Seeadler commander.

On March 30, the Cambron arrived in Rio, and the very next day a telegram arrived in London from the British Embassy in Brazil with detailed testimonies from the prisoners released by Luckner. From these testimonies, it became known that Luckner constantly kept maps of the Cape Horn area in the chart room, and this circumstance to a certain extent revealed his future plans. At this time, seven British cruisers were off the western coast of South America. Of these, the Lancaster and Otranto stood in Peru, in the port of San Nicolás; Orbit is in Mejilón and Ewoka is in northern British Columbia. On April 1, the Lancaster, Orbita, and Otranto were ordered to put to sea and sail south to intercept the Seeadler.

At this point, Luckner was in the middle of the Atlantic, at the approximate latitude of Buenos Aires. Thus, Luckner had to sail almost as long as

British cruisers under steam. But the German corsair faced another extremely difficult task - to go around Cape Horn at the most unfavorable time of the year.

On April 5, the British Admiralty sent additional instructions to the cruisers.

The Orbita and Otranto, together with the collier Feinister, were ordered to stay on patrol north and south of the line at the latitude of Cape Horn, and the Lancaster was to head south at full speed.

Meanwhile, the Seeadler had already passed the Falkland Islands and was approaching Cape Horn. Thanks to a fair wind, the sailboat was going much faster than the British expected. Seeadler radio operators intercepted an English telegram sent to no one knows whom: "I warn you. Stay away from Fernando Nornha. Meve is located there."

Luckner thanked the British for the warning, but he had to fight not with them, but with the furious elements. To round Cape Horn, where terrible storms are born and storms are constantly raging, the Seeadler had to fight a terrifying hurricane for three weeks. Giant waves, which can only be seen off Cape Horn, rolled over the ship, breaking through the deck. The wind tore the sails to shreds. It was a brutal single combat between the destructive forces of nature and the energy of people who did not want to die. Nights passed without sleep or rest. Part of the sailors was constantly on the middle deck, repairing the sails. Every morning the torn sails were replaced with new ones sewn together overnight. It was a very exhausting job - to sew sails on such a bumpy when thick needles instead of canvas stuck into the hands of the sailors.

During a storm, the crew of the sailboat could not take shelter in the superstructures and below deck. On the contrary, her place was on the masts. Even in good weather, in order to change course twenty degrees, the whole watch had to climb on the yards to manage all twenty-four sails. But, in the end, Cape Horn managed to go around. But the Seeadler had no time to leave the storm zone, as a new danger awaited it. From the "crow's nest" on the mast, they noticed one of the British cruisers sent to intercept the Seeadler. Minutes of anxious anticipation of further events flowed.

Did you notice the Seeadler from the cruiser? Luckner commanded "port aboard" and made a sharp turn through the gybe. To help all the sails, the engine was started. The rigging of the sailboat was ready to burst. Hearts beat anxiously. Dozens of eyes watched the enemy cruiser through binoculars. If he noticed them, then the best that the Seeadler crew expected was captured. Fortunately, the eyes of the Seeadler signalers were sharper than those of the British. At night, turning north again, the Seeadler entered the Pacific Ocean.

## VIII

In the Pacific, Luckner was in for a surprise. The radio operator read him a telegram, intercepted from the English coast station, which notified the whole world about the death of the German auxiliary cruiser Monkfish. "The Monkfish died with the flag flying," the radiogram said. "The commander and part of the team have been taken prisoner and are on their way to Montevideo."

It's nice to be at your own funeral! But Luckner had to rack his brains to figure out what this misinformation could mean? The English, he knew, never lied in vain. Apparently, the fame of "Monkfish" spread too widely, which caused alarm in the Allied maritime circles. English warships in vain

they combed the ocean, carrying guard duty at Cape Horn and at the Cape of Good Hope, trying to intercept the sailboat, which became something like the Flying Dutchman.

Meanwhile, in the ports of South Africa, South America, Australia and New Zealand, there were dozens of loaded ships, not daring to go to sea. Freight prices skyrocketed, along with insurance premiums. Apparently, wanting to lower them, the British spread misinformation about the death of Seeadler.

Luckner decided to also engage in disinformation, ordering the radio operator to broadcast in plain text: "SOS. SOS. (SOS. SOS.) German submarine!" He hoped that the news of German U-boats in the Pacific would also raise insurance premiums and freight rates.

Meanwhile, the Seeadler was heading for the Marquesas Islands along the coast of South America and past the island of Juan Fernandez. Not a single ship was found as far as the Hawaiian Islands.

Luckner decided to switch to a shipping line between San Francisco and Australia. Operating near the equator, which the Seeadler crossed two or three times a day, managed to catch and sink three small American sailboats en route to Christmas Island.

Prisoners again appeared on the Seeadler: three American skippers and their crews. Time passed languidly, sometimes for weeks the ocean was completely empty, not a single ship came across.

The Seeadler raid had been going on for two hundred and fifty days. During this time, it has never been possible to replenish the supply of drinking water. All this, combined with the terrifying heat, the lack of fresh provisions and the eternal stuffiness and dampness in the living quarters, led to a sharp deterioration in the health of the raider's crew.

After thirty-five thousand miles, the sailors of the Seeadler did not call at any port and saw nothing but sky and sea. Among sailors, many developed symptoms of beriberi, leading to leukemia. Others have swollen limbs and swollen joints from malnutrition and lack of water.

It was necessary to find some uninhabited island, stock up on fresh provisions and drinking water, and also get a good rest. Luckner then planned to cruise around Australia and New Zealand, and then move combat activities back to the Atlantic Ocean.

At first, Luckner intended to land on one of the islands of the Cook Archipelago. But this had to be abandoned, since there was evidence that a British radio station was deployed on the archipelago, and there was even a garrison on one of the islands.

On reflection, Luckner chose the island of Mopelia, which is part of the group of islands of the Partnership.

The Partnership Archipelago, or as it is called the Society Archipelago, or simply Tahiti, was discovered by the British in 1767. It is located in the South Pacific Ocean, part of the Polynesian group of islands.

On July 29, 1917, the Seeadler approached the island of Mopelia. From the side of the raider, the island looked like a country from a wonderful fairy tale. It was a real paradise with huge bright flowers lined with tall palms and rubber trees. The coral reefs surrounding the island cascaded down into the sea and were reflected in the sunlit transparent water with a magical rainbow of fabulous colors, playing with white, blue, green and red highlights, like precious stones in the crown of a medieval monarch.

The ring-shaped coral atoll, like all islands of volcanic origin, surrounded a quiet inner lagoon, as deep as the ocean itself, but mirror-calm. It was an excellent harbor, but the narrow passage into the lagoon made it impossible for the Seeadler to pass through. I had to anchor on the outer side of the atoll at the entrance to the lagoon. Luckner ordered the boats to be lowered. After nine months of uninterrupted stay on board the ship, Count Luckner felt like something like Columbus.

If the island, even from the outside, aroused admiration, then after the Seeadler sailors landed on it, they began to look around in amazement, like Odysseus's companions who had fallen on one of the enchanted islands sung by Homer.

Millions of seabirds of various breeds nested on the island. Giant tortoises crawled everywhere in unprecedented numbers. The lagoon was full of fish. Entire herds of feral domestic pigs ran around the island, feeding on coconuts that fell to the ground.

Luckner could not even dream of such an abundance of fresh provisions.

It quickly became clear that three natives lived on the island, hired by some French company to catch giant tortoises. The nervous tension of ship life, full of unforeseen anxieties and dangers, changed for the Seeadler sailors into complete relaxation. Luckner and his people felt like they were on the island as if they were at a resort. They quickly managed to negotiate with the natives, and they assisted the sailors in procuring provisions.

Officially, the atoll belonged to France, which was at war with Germany, which added extra charm to the rest on the island.

The sailors scattered around the island, catching turtles, pigs and fish, as well as collecting bird eggs and coconuts. In the evening they all returned to the Seeadler loaded with fresh provisions. The fish was smoked, the meat of turtles and pigs was salted, the eggs were conserved in lime. Luckner did not like the chosen anchorage. It seemed to him that it was safer to be at sea in the visibility of the island, and to send boats ashore only in the morning and evening. But this required approaching the island twice a day, using a diesel engine and consuming the last remnants of precious fuel. Therefore, this idea had to be abandoned.

On the morning of August 2, when the boat with the sailors was once again about to go ashore, Luckner and everyone on the Seeadler's bridge noticed that the surface of the ocean on the horizon was strangely swelling upwards. At first, Luckner thought it was a mirage. However, it soon became clear that a tsunami was coming towards them - a giant tidal wave. It was believed that it was formed during underwater earthquakes, but no one knew exactly the nature of the occurrence of this fantastically terrible wave, reaching a height of one hundred meters.

Luckner quickly assessed the danger. - Start the engine! he ordered. - Both watches - up! Drop anchor!

The engine, however, could not be started quickly. Compressed air was pumped into the cylinders, but the diesel was silent. A gigantic wave, twice the height of the Seeadler's masts, was rapidly approaching the elusive Monkfish. If the diesel worked! But he never got around to it.

An improbably high wall wave approached the Seeadler, picked it up like a piece of wood, lifted it up and threw it with a crash and crash onto a coral reef. The masts were blown to pieces, spars, rigging and sails all fell down. The hull of the sailboat was pierced by coral reefs in several places. When the tsunami wave

passed, the proud Seeadler lay in the form of a heap of wreckage on a coral reef. Fortunately, no one died - everyone managed to hide under the forecastle.

It took a truly diabolical force to destroy the Monkfish.

But Luckner did not think of indulging in despair. The disaster has happened - there's nothing you can do about it. The commander of the Seeadler immediately organized work to save what else could be saved - food, water and weapons for one hundred and five people. Everything had to be carried by hand through deep water, treading over sharp coral and battling strong currents. The legs of almost all of them were covered with bleeding abrasions and cuts.

Nevertheless, working day and night, the sailors managed to transfer everything vital to the island.

Seeadler died, but here, under the palm trees, the first German colony arose in these places. Now it was necessary to adapt to a new way of life. They ate mostly bird eggs. Millions of birds nested on the island, most of which were gulls. As soon as they were scared, they rose in giant flocks and eclipsed the sun.

At night, when the sailors kindled fires, hundreds, and sometimes thousands, crawled hermit crabs to the fire.

In the early days, sailors hung their berths between palm trees, but this could end badly - coconuts, falling from a height of fifteen to twenty meters, could kill or maim the sleeping ones. It's also lucky that none of these "vegetable bombs" fell on anyone's head. On a land that was teeming with billions of insects, it was also impossible to sleep.

I had to build dwellings, or rather, tents from the remnants of sails. At the same time, the captive American captain Petersen turned out to be an excellent "builder", who built a real canvas palace for himself and his young wife.

The tents were pitched along the shore, in one line, forming a whole street called the Monkfish embankment. The town was divided into three quarters: German, where the Seeadler sailors lived, as well as French and American, where prisoners of the respective nationalities lived. In addition to residential tents, storage tents were built for food, weapons and ammunition, for maps and navigational tools. A large galley with a stove was also built and a radio station was deployed. The radio station caught news from the air, replacing the newspaper.

In addition, a wardroom was built, where even a wooden floor was laid. There were swivel chairs bolted to the floor, arranged around a large table, as if on board a ship.

All furniture from the Seeadler was transferred to the living tents. A diesel engine and a dynamo machine were removed from the dead sailboat, supplying the camp with electric light. In the middle of the camp, a ship's bell was hung from a palm tree, flasks were beaten off. Right there, on the cleared area, the ship's orchestra played in the evenings. On one of the tallest palm trees, the German flag was hoisted and an observation deck was erected to keep an eye on all ships passing through the sea.

Every day they smoked fish and fell asleep to the soothing sound of the surf.

The idyll was complete, and everything would have been fine, if not for one circumstance - the war continued, and Luckner was ashamed to lead such a lifestyle in this fragrant

paradise. He was sure that rich people would give a fortune for a two-week vacation in such conditions. However, something had to be done.

One boat survived from the Seeadler. A plan was developed to go to sea on it, find some ship there and capture it. To some, this plan seemed unthinkable, but Luckner believed that a pirate is like a card player - he must

keep trying your luck...

For the boat they made a mast, rigging and sails, re-oiled it and painted it. By the twenty-third of August the boat was ready to go to sea. But, no matter how Luckner himself rushed into the sea (he himself would have done it without hesitation), the responsibility of the commander suppressed his passions, preventing him from frivolously risking other people's lives.

Everyone was aware that the conceived adventure, even under the most favorable circumstances, has very little chance of success. Luckner considered the low-sidedness of the boat to be the main obstacle. Even with a slight roll, the boat will draw water, and in bad weather, it simply runs the risk of being overwhelmed by the waves.

Gathered a council of war. First of all, it was necessary to decide whether to go to sea at all, and if to go out, then where. It was, of course, impossible to take the entire Seeadler crew into the boat. Most had to be left on the island, having agreed in advance on the return date of those who decided to try their luck on a boat. In the event that those who remained on the island left it, they had to report this by returning a special letter, hidden in an agreed place. It should also be remembered that once every six months a French sailing ship approached Mopelia to pick up coconuts and turtles harvested by the natives.

Luckner intended to first reach the Cook Islands and, if a suitable ship could not be captured along the road or on the islands, then proceed to the Fiji Islands. He expected to travel sixty miles a day, to complete the entire passage in thirty days, and in about three months to return to Mopelia with a captured ship. The boat was open, six meters long, with a freeboard of only twenty-eight centimeters. In addition, she had to be loaded with food and equipment for many weeks of sailing. It was decided to take several large cans of canned meat and bacon, but the main supply of provisions was crackers and water.

A machine gun was installed on the boat, two rifles, several revolvers and hand grenades were taken.

Luckner wanted to call for volunteers to participate in the upcoming trip, but everyone was ready to go with him on a boat to the ocean. He himself had to select five sailors from the most physically strong and hardy. Over those remaining on Mopelia, Luckner handed over command to Lieutenant Kling.

The breakup was hard. Neither those who left, nor those who remained, consoled themselves with special illusions that they would meet again. In this regard, it is interesting to note that no one informed Luckner of the operations in the same area of the German auxiliary cruiser Wolf under the command of Captain 2nd Rank Nerger. Nerger also knew nothing about the actions and fate of Seeadler. It cost nothing for the Wolf to approach the island and take on board all the shipwrecked comrades.

Any secrecy has along with positive and a lot of negative aspects!

The boat on which Luckner and his five sailors defied the Pacific Ocean was moving at an average speed of four knots. The course was taken to the island of Atia, which was a little more than three hundred miles.

The boat had a three-week supply of drinking water and a two-month supply of crackers.

The boat was so crowded that it was only possible to get from bow to stern by crawling over bales and boxes. Everything that needed to be protected from dampness - tobacco, provisions, a camera and photographic accessories, warm clothes - was stored in special hermetic chambers along the sides of the boat. Because of this, the stability of the fragile ship was severely impaired, and the boat often scooped on the sides, despite the fact that the weather in the first days of the voyage was relatively calm. At the bottom of the boat, we managed to find a place for four mattresses, where, crouched, four people could rest at once.

To protect against rain and waves around the boat, along the gunwale, a wide tarpaulin was attached. If necessary, it unwound and connected with the same panel of the other side, creating a kind of awning. Iron poles held this awning at some height, providing good cover for people and goods.

It was very difficult to make navigational calculations under such conditions. There wasn't even a place to put the cards. With any careless movement, everything flew overboard. I had to work on pitching with numb hands. Maps, nautical charts, logarithmic tables, and books stuck together from dampness. They were laid out to dry in the sun, and they swelled up like pig carcasses.

But the most difficult thing was that because of the monotonous food and inactivity, everyone suffered from constipation.

Nevertheless, it seemed to Luckner that they reached the island of Atia, the nearest of the Cook Archipelago, quite quickly, and landed on the territory occupied by the enemy for the first time.

Luckner, together with Lieutenant Kirchgeis, accompanied by a crowd of astonished natives, went to pay a visit to the British governor.

The governor was reclining on the veranda of his house. Seeing the strangers, he did not even move. On his face was an expression of complete contentment with a hint of disdain. Such, according to Luckner, should be the face of a man whose country owned most of the globe. True, when he saw Luckner, the governor, judging by the expression on his face, became as arrogant as he was suspicious.

"My name is Van Guten," Lukener introduced himself to the governor, "and this is my assistant Southhart. We are Dutch Americans. A couple of months ago at the Dutch Club of San Francisco we made a bet that we would sail in an open boat from Honolulu, past the Cook Islands, to Tahiti and back. The bet was for twenty-five thousand dollars. According to its terms, we are obliged to land on the shore in known places and check in for control. Therefore, be so kind as to give us a certificate that we were here. We would also like to take water, canned food and fresh fruit here.

The governor's face brightened. Although he considered that such bets indicated that America was beginning to fall into childhood, it did not even occur to him to demand any documents from Luckner, or even a logbook. Proudly British, he had such a contempt for foreign languages that he mistook the Low German dialect in which Luckner spoke to Kirchgeiss for Dutch. Apparently stunned by

boredom, the governor started a conversation with the sailors about the war, condemning it and assuring that only the "yellow race", that is, Japan, would benefit from this war.

A quarter of an hour later, a French missionary appeared on the governor's veranda. Luckner addressed him in French, which brought the missionary into a state of complete delight. Being an ardent patriot of France, the pastor invited the sailors to his home, where they were greeted with the sounds of the Marseillaise, performed on the gramophone, and a wonderful dinner.

On the way back through the village, the Germans, according to Luckner, were "enthusiastically greeted by the native girls, who presented them with flowers and fruits."

Luckner once again visited the governor, asking him about the ships entering the island. It turned out that the arrival of sailing ships was not expected, and Luckner had to postpone the capture of the ship until he arrived at the Aituaki Islands, where he decided to go. Having received a certificate of arrival from the governor, Luckner again went out on his boat to the open ocean the next morning.

Unfortunately the weather got worse. Poured endless rains that soaked everything through. Waves constantly flooded the boat. Sometimes, within an hour, two hundred and fifty buckets of water had to be scooped out of the boat. In the last twenty-five days of the voyage, Luckner even forgot the last time he was dry. Everyone was shivering from the cold, sometimes warmed by hot coffee. Even the canvas awning began to leak water.

On the island of Aituaki, they failed to catch the schooner they planned to capture. It was decided nevertheless to go ashore, get information about the movement of ships and spend at least one night in a dry room.

On August 30, 1917, a boat with six sailors from the crew of the deceased Seeadler approached the pier of Aituaki Island.

On this Godforsaken island, even the arrival of a boat with some suspicious personalities was considered an event. Therefore, the governor himself met the guests at the pier, as the residents were called here. The governor wore pince-nez and somehow reminded Luckner of American President Wilson. Here, Luckner decided to pass off his company as Norwegians, since Dutch merchants could be on the island.

The governor's pince-nez, surrounded by natives, gleamed from the pier, not very friendly. Looking suspiciously at the arrivals, the governor immediately ordered that the boat be examined first by a certain Norwegian who worked as a carpenter on the island. Greeted with greetings in his native language, the carpenter was immediately imbued with sympathy for the "countrymen" who appeared. But the governor did not calm down. He decided to divide all the sailors who arrived in order to listen to what each of them would tell separately. The Germans were taken to different houses owned by wealthy islanders, offering to dine there, take a bath and relax. It was impossible to refuse, but, just in case, everyone put a hand grenade in their pocket. It also turned out to be impossible to lay out things to dry, since the natives surrounded the boat in a tight ring. It was impossible to lift the blankets under which the weapons were hidden.

Lieutenant Kirchgeis dined with the governor, and Luckner dined with a wealthy local merchant named Lowe. Luckner was nervous, because during dinner the owner was constantly brought some notes, and he wrote something in response.

Returning to the pier, Luckner met a Norwegian carpenter, who said that they were considered Germans and they wanted to capture them, for a start, by pulling the boat ashore. Luckner ordered two of his subordinates to remain permanently in the boat and, if necessary, fire on the pier with a machine gun in order to cover the return of those on the shore. Himself



Luckner, plucking up the audacity, went to the governor for the promised certificate. At the same time, he planned to buy provisions from local residents.

The governor met Luckner more than coolly. He demanded from the former commander of the Seeadler all the documents related to his voyage, subjecting him, at the same time, to a uniform interrogation, trying to find out various names and dates. When asked by Luckner what caused such suspicion, the governor honestly answered that the whole Luckner company was suspected of being not Norwegians at all, but Germans.

If this is not so, then he will apologize, but asks to refute his accusations with documents. Luckner cocked the trigger of the Mauser in his pocket, felt the hand grenade and invited the governor to go with him to the pier, where he would show him the necessary documents.

The governor agreed and, accompanied by a whole crowd of natives, he and Luckner went to the pier. There, a tall man in an English military uniform was waiting for them, asking the governor for permission to arrest Luckner. Luckner leaned close to the governor's ear and warned in a low voice:

"If you decide to stir up some scandal, I will shoot this lanky one.

Luckner remained seated on the wharf, while the governor went down into the boat to look in the logbook and inspect the boat.

The logbook, of course, could not be found. One of the sailors even suggested that he had fallen overboard. Instead, the governor was thrust into the hands of a large barn book, captured earlier on one of the American schooners. Luckner took this book with him because of the mass of useful geographical information that was included in it.

Of course, everyone forgot that the Seeadler timebook was included in the book. On the very first page of this notebook was written in bold Gothic letters "The Kaiser Fleet" and depicted a ruffled German eagle.

What language is it written in? asked the Governor, burying himself in a palisade of Gothic letters.

"I don't know," said Lieutenant Kirchgeiss. We got this notebook in Honolulu when we made a bet.

The governor pretended to believe. Passing along the boat, he lifted the edge of one of the blankets and saw two Mausers. He quickly lowered the blanket, realizing the complete military superiority of the aliens.

"Just don't show it to the crowd," he asked Kirchgeiss.

For greater persuasiveness, Kirchgeiss showed him a machine gun, rifles and hand grenades.

The governor turned pale as death and nervously shouted to his companions, crowded on the pier:

"Everything is in perfect order here!"

Luckner got into the boat.

The Governor was trembling.

"Cover it well," he told Luckner, pointing to the hand grenades. Then he shouted again at the pier:

— I didn't find anything. These are peaceful athletes!

Luckner planned to sail in the evening, but the governor insisted that this be done immediately. Luckner agreed. Weapons are good, but killing someone if exposed without being dressed in military uniform was irresponsible and could lead to very serious consequences.

And the boat of pirate adventurers, having left this not very hospitable island, again went out to the open sea.

For thirteen days Luckner and his men did not see the earth. For thirteen days without sleep or rest, they sailed the boat, fighting the waves and constantly scooping out buckets of water. For three days they crossed a huge expanse of floating pumice thrown up to the surface by an underwater volcano. Pumice, falling into the boat along with the wave, covered everything with crisp sand. The rain poured non-stop. From the cold, the bodies soared. The food consisted only of crackers and water. The people were exhausted. The mattresses, which were never destined to dry out, were thrown overboard. It was not possible to escape at night from the cold under wet blankets. The water ran out. There was still an excellent fat, but no one dared to touch it for fear that this would increase the pangs of thirst. The sailors tried to collect rainwater in the sail, but the canvas was so saturated with sea salt that the water collected in this way was not suitable for drinking. The scurvy made itself felt more and more acutely. The joints were very swollen, especially in the knees, making it impossible to stand on their feet. The tongues were swollen, the gums became whiter than snow, the teeth were wobbly and excruciatingly ill, and they had only hard crackers to eat. Swollen joints, hitting the sides of the boat on the roll, caused acute pain. Gradually, complete indifference took possession of everyone, death no longer frightened, but seemed to be a deliverer. Thoughts were confused, brains became lifeless, reminding Luckner of balls of wool.

"One thought connected us with life," Luckner later recalled. - Go-go! Not to miss a single gust of wind unused, not to lose an hour. Every minute brought us closer to the saving land. And we kept fighting."

On the morning of the thirteenth day, the small island of Niu appeared on the horizon. The life of all sailors depended on getting fresh food and water ashore.

On the shore, meeting the boat, a large crowd of natives gathered. None of the German sailors had the strength to get to the ground, and they began to explain to the black natives with signs that they wanted to eat and drink. They quickly delivered water and a huge amount of bananas to the boat. It was the best thing that could be thought of for the sick and loose teeth of the exhausted corsairs, and they greedily pounced on food.

Having strengthened his strength and rested, Luckner led the boat further, striving for the cherished goal - to capture some ship.

On the twenty-second day of the voyage, Luckner's boat landed on one of the eastern islands of the Fiji archipelago - Katafanga. Here Luckner and his men could get ashore to stretch their legs, weakened by scurvy and rheumatism.

Having rested on Katafang, the boat headed further - to the large islands of the archipelago, and soon the pirates reached the island of Vakaya.

The boat was noticed from the shore and, assuming that there were shipwrecked people in it, they sent a sailboat to meet them to help. The boat took them in tow and brought them to the harbor, where there were many ships sheltered from the weather.

Luckner and his sailors descended into enemy territory for the fourth time. Everyone asked

sailors, who they are and where they come from. They lied as best they could. Didn't come up with anything original. forces.

The natives on the islands in general have always been very gullible, but a half-breed among them corrosively interrogated the sailors, asking them very insidious questions. The alarmed Luckner wanted to immediately go to sea, but a serious storm broke out there. Returning to the pier, Luckner learned that a steam launch had just put out to sea to inform the authorities on a nearby island of their arrival. A rumor had already spread among the natives that a nimble half-breed had caught a whole group of Germans. To find out the details, Luckner decided to have a binge with the only white and stubborn mestizo on the island, sacrificing the last bottle of rum for this purpose.

Bely, drunk, honestly admitted to Luckner that the mestizo mistook them for the Germans and notified the authorities on the neighboring island about this.

Luckner again wanted to go to sea, but again nothing happened due to a strong squall. I had to spend one more night on the island. In the evening, a large two-masted schooner entered the harbor. Luckner and Kirchgeis, without saying a word, decided that this schooner was the ultimate of their dreams. She needs to be captured immediately. After conferring with his subordinates, Luckner sent Kirchgeis on reconnaissance. The lieutenant was to report to the schooner and ask the captain to take on board as passengers "a group of Americans." Luckner believed that, having waited for the schooner to enter the open sea, they would capture it relatively easily.

The captain agreed and asked the "Americans" to come on board at three in the morning.

Packing things, weapons and military uniforms in well-laced bags, Luckner and his people crossed to the schooner at night. Repressing his joy, Luckner strolled along the deck, examining the beautifully equipped ship. He imagined how happy those who remained on Mopelia would be when he returned for them on such a beautiful schooner! Among other things, the schooner had two engines - it was ideally suited for cruising warfare. Luckner simply could not wait for the schooner to go to sea, and he, having captured her, would raise the German flag on the mast.

While the former commander of the Seeadler was indulging in sweet dreams, a large steamer unexpectedly arrived in the harbor. A boat with a British officer and armed native soldiers immediately rolled away from him. The boat approached the schooner, the officer and soldiers boarded, where Luckner and his men were immediately arrested.

Felix Luckner's next odyssey ended before it even started.

X

Upon learning that he had succeeded in capturing the former commander of the Monkfish and five of his crew, a British officer told Luckner:

Your name has already become a legend. The word of the British - you will meet decent treatment.

"The word of the British" the officer pronounced with special emphasis.

The prisoners under escort were transferred to the steamer, which delivered them to Suva in the evening of the same day. At the pier, the sailors were met by another convoy, under whose guard they were transferred to a room that, as they later learned, served as a rooming house for local natives.

At the very first interrogation, Luckner had to compose an entire novel in order to cover up the traces of his subordinates who remained on Mopelia. To avoid contradictions in testimony, everyone else simply refused to speak.

A few days later, the prisoners were transported to a real prison and seated in separate cells. Luckner protested vehemently against this treatment of prisoners of war. The head of the prison listened to him patiently, but referred to the order he had received.

On the eighth day, the head of the prison came to Luckner's cell and, trying to be as kind as possible, announced that the Japanese admiral wanted to talk to Luckner, asking the former Seeadler commander to come to him on the Izumo cruiser, which was on the roadstead.

Under escort, an English officer and two soldiers of Luckner were taken to the pier, where a whaleboat flying the Japanese flag was waiting for them. The Japanese officer in the whaleboat stood up and saluted Luckner. When the whaleboat approached the cruiser, all the officers went out on the upper deck to greet the famous corsair. The Admiral met Luckner at the gangplank, shook hands with him, and, bowing, said:

"I bow to you for what you have done for your country. The admiral then introduced Luckner to his officers, announcing:

"Here stands a man before you, whom we have been unsuccessfully chasing day and night for three months.

Bowing again to Luckner, as only the Japanese know how to do, the admiral, making a mournful face, said:

"I am very sorry to have to meet you here in this position. Our common desire would be to meet in battle, which would bring us both great joy.

For his part, Luckner expressed regret that he was not captured by a Japanese admiral. The admiral was surprised to learn that Luckner was being held in a filthy colonial prison. Luckner, to his surprise, immediately noticed how cold and reserved the Japanese behaved with the English officer. The English escort soldiers were generally not allowed on the cruiser, leaving them in the boat.

The Japanese admiral invited Luckner to his salon. After the dirty prison cell, the admiral's salon seemed to Luckner the hall of the royal palace. Having drunk a glass of champagne with Luckner and treated him to a cigar, the admiral showed the former Seeadler commander two small books in Japanese. Luckner would not have understood anything if German ships had not been drawn on the covers of books. On one is the famous cruiser Emden, on the other the auxiliary cruiser Meve. The admiral explained to Luckner that he himself was the author of these books, writing them for the education of young people. This is the Japanese custom - people should know what the warriors of other countries are able to do for their homeland, and try to do more. Now the admiral would like to write a third book - about the Seeadler, or "Angler", as it is sometimes called, and therefore would ask Luckner to tell you some details of his unique raid on a sailboat.

The first question that interested the admiral: where did the Seeadler come from? The Japanese believed that the sailing ship left some neutral port of the USA, Chile or Argentina, and were very surprised to learn that the ship left Germany, was examined by the British along the way, broke into the Atlantic, rounded Cape Horn, and only after that entered Pacific Ocean.

At the beginning of the conversation, the commander and senior officer of the Izumo cruiser entered the admiral's saloon. While drinking champagne with them, Luckner told the Japanese a brief history of the raid.

Seeadler, while trying not to give a word or a hint that part of his crew remained on the island of Mopelia. Luckner convinced the Japanese that after the death of the Seeadler they had boarded the captured American schooner Manila and made it clear that this schooner was still operating at sea with the rest of the crew.

After listening to a real ode to long and ornate oriental compliments from the Japanese, Luckner left the Izumo cruiser and was escorted back to prison.

Very serious accusations were made against the former Seeadler commander. In particular, the British knew almost nothing about the operations of the auxiliary cruiser Wolf under the command of Captain Second Rank Nerger in this area of the Pacific Ocean, and many of its victims were attributed to Luckner. Among the victims of the "Wolf" was the steamer "Vairuna", on board of which there were many passengers. A formidable accusation hung over Luckner that he had destroyed the ship along with the crew and passengers, and this threatened with execution. Luckner swore that he had never seen the ship, but no one, of course, believed him. About the actions of "Wolf" Luckner also knew nothing, like the British. Only after the return of the Wolf to Germany, when it became known that the crew and passengers of the Vairuna had been taken prisoner by Nerger, were these charges dropped from Luckner.

Relatives of the missing on the Vairun gathered daily at the gates of the New Zealand prison in Auckland, where Luckner and his comrades were sent, demanding their extradition for lynching. Luckner could see from the faces of his captors that they were quite inclined to allow it.

"It would be bitter," Luckner recalled, "to tell all that we had to endure from the inhuman cruelty of the guards around us."

Luckner and Kirchgeis were separated from the four sailors. The sailors were sent to Somay Island, and they were sent to the mine station in Devonport, which is part of the fortifications of Auckland. A large mine storage was there converted into a prison, where mainly deserters were kept.

Then both Seeadler officers were transferred to the island of Motuihi near Auckland, where they housed German subjects brought there from all the Polynesian islands and interned back in August 1914. In fact, Luckner and Kirchgeis were the first real prisoners of war brought to this camp.

The prisoners were allowed to move freely around the island during the daytime, and on one of the first walks Luckner saw a fine motor boat that belonged to the camp commandant. Immediately, the dashing pirate had a plan to capture this boat and escape. But before doing this, Luckner prudently decided to first look around and get comfortable in a new place.

By six o'clock in the evening, all the prisoners walking around the island were supposed to return to the camp. Sentinels were posted everywhere and it seemed that the camp was very strictly guarded, but in reality the sentries were very negligent in their service. Luckner was given more trouble by his compatriots and comrades in misfortune. Among them was an Austrian doctor, who, according to the available information, was an informant of the camp commandant. To lull the vigilance of both the guards and the prisoners, Luckner began to feign rheumatism. For days he did not get up from his bed, and the Austrian doctor smeared his back with iodine. In good weather, he moved around the island on crutches, accustoming everyone to the idea that he was disabled.

Even the camp commandant expressed his sympathy to Luckner, although he spoke to his soldiers about Luckner's illness in these words:

It's very good that he has rheumatism. This is a dangerous type. Now, at least he can't do anything.

Upon learning of this, Luckner realized that his simulation had succeeded. They believed him. At the same time, he carefully observed the prisoners in order to select from them a reliable team with which he intended to make an escape.

Fourteen naval cadets from the North German Lloyd's Nautical School in Bremen were in the camp. The cadets were practicing on one of the merchant ships caught in the war in Australia. They kept together and all were burning with a thirst for adventure, which is not surprising at their age. After selecting seven cadets who seemed to him the most reliable and physically strong, Luckner gradually began to acquaint them with his plan. In his plan, Luckner also dedicated the mechanical engineer Freund, who was also a prisoner, but, nevertheless, was responsible for the good condition of the commandant's boat. The helmsman on this boat was one of the German cadets named Paulsen, who also ran a camp shop where you could buy various consumer trifles.

The resourceful cadets made some makeshift hand grenades using marmalade tins and explosives stolen from a nearby farmer for whom some of them worked uprooting trees.

Luckner himself built a sextant from an old steering wheel, a razor and mirror fragments. Subsequently, it turned out that a home-made device made it possible to determine the location of the ship with an accuracy of fifty miles.

The canvas for the boat was ordered directly from Auckland. Cadet Paulsen, preparing goods for his camp shop, wrote out requirements, leaving empty places in the list of goods. The commandant signed these demands without reading them. Therefore, the conspirators obtained the material for supplying the future trophy with a sail surprisingly easily.

Provisions were also procured for the future, mainly by secretly catching commandant's chickens and salting them. The commandant drew attention to the disappearance of chickens, but the doctor explained that the chickens were dying from some kind of "bird" disease. The commandant took the doctor's words into account, without even asking where the dead birds go?

The future sail was sewn in the form of a theatrical curtain for an amateur Christmas performance, for which permission was obtained from the commandant. We managed to get binoculars, a watch, and even cut out the necessary maps from a geographical atlas. Homemade daggers and grenades were made as weapons. Luckner, who already had experience in bluffing with weapons, took care to make some scarecrows and a fake machine gun. However, he firmly believed that the German flag and military uniform would be their main weapon.

The carelessness of the British was such that in the end they managed to steal two real rifles directly from the camp arsenal.

Now it was necessary to transfer everything prepared to the boat.

Luckner called a "war council".

It was decided this way: engineer Freund had to report to the commandant that the boat had leaked and needed to be repaired. It would be nice to have it repainted. The commandant immediately became agitated and ordered the soldiers to pull the boat ashore the next morning. Now the conspirators had quite enough time to transfer and hide everything necessary for swimming in the boat.

The boat was called "Pearl". It had a length of nine meters and was equipped with a good motor. Under the guise of cans of gasoline, fresh water was delivered to the boat. We also managed to get enough gasoline. At the end of all the work, the newly repaired boat, sparkling with fresh paint, was dragged back into the water by the soldiers.

As the hour of flight approached, Luckner began to feign bouts of rheumatism more and more frequently. The commandant shook his head sympathetically, but in his heart he was clearly happy.

The last steps remained to be taken: turn off the alarm, cut the telephone wires and cut off the island from Auckland, disable the small rowboat to eliminate the very possibility of a chase.

After making sure that the commandant and the escorts did not suspect anything, Luckner gathered all the conspirators - eleven people in number - on the pier for a dress rehearsal. Luckner delayed his escape because the weather was very bad and there were no sailing ships at sea. And the whole plan of Luckner was based on the fact that, having fled on the commandant's boat, to meet at sea and capture some kind of schooner.

While Luckner hesitated, someone dropped an anonymous note to the commandant advising him to search his own boat. The commandant summoned Cadet Paulsen, demanding from him the keys to the anchor-chain lock and to the cabin.

Everything seemed to collapse.

But, to the general surprise of the conspirators, the commandant, having taken away the keys from Paulsen, limited himself to this, without starting to search the boat.

Probably, seeing how Luckner, due to his "rheumatism", no longer actually gets out of bed, the commandant rejected the very possibility of escaping in such a state, one must also remember that the Australians and New Zealanders, knowing that Luckner once began his maritime career in Australia, to a certain extent they were proud of him, considering the incredible adventures of the corsair Kaiser almost part of his national treasure. In addition, the whereabouts of the bulk of Seeadler's crew were not known, and there were fears that they might appear off the island to try to free their commander. Therefore, armed boats constantly patrolled the water area around Motuihi Island, and the commandant had no reason to fear that someone could escape from the camp, even capturing his motor boat.

On the thirteenth of December, the commandant with his daughter went for a ride in the sea in his boat, intending to return in the evening. By the time he returned, Luckner ordered everyone to be on full alert. Each of those participating in the escape had to independently get out of the inner zone of the camp, the gates of which were closed at six o'clock in the evening. Then there was an evening check, after which no one had the right to leave the zone.

At half-past five, Luckner received word that the Pearl was returning to the island. At six o'clock the boat, as planned, approached the pier. The commandant was in an excellent mood, and soon left with his daughter in a cab, leaving the boat in the care of the captured mechanical engineer Freund.

By this time, all the conspirators arrived at the pier in different ways. After waiting for the departure of the commandant, Luckner ordered everyone to take their places in the boat and started the engine. It was still quite light when the boat, in front of the patrol boats, went along the coast of the island, heading for the open sea. Fearing gunfire from the boats, Luckner ordered everyone to lie down in the bottom of the boat, but nothing happened. From the boats they noticed the commandant's boat and, apparently, decided that he himself again decided to ride on the sea.

Meanwhile, word of the escape quickly spread throughout the camp. At first, the commandant did not believe. Luckner is too sick to run. In addition, on his boat of gasoline for only a day. But, nevertheless, he ordered Luckner to be brought to him, believing that he was walking somewhere on the island. Luckner, of course, could not be found. Then the commandant ordered

roll call of the prisoners, and he went to the pier to make sure where his boat was. The roll call quickly revealed the names of the fugitives, and the absence of a boat spoke eloquently of the method of escape.

A commotion began. Trying to report the emergency to Auckland, the commandant discovered that the telephone connection was broken. The telegraph station was also put out of action. The commandant tried to contact Auckland using a signal searchlight, but nothing came of it - Auckland did not respond to light signals. Time passed, and only at half past one in the morning in Auckland became worried due to the absence of the usual telephone report from the island. An officer was sent to the island, and only late at night did the news of the escape spread to all authorities. A whole flotilla of small steamboats armed with machine guns and patrol boats was sent to the sea to search for the fugitives. They were joined by volunteers on their own boats and yachts. Everyone believed that the "Pearl" could not go far, due to lack of seaworthiness and lack of fuel. A rumor even spread that the boat had capsized and all the fugitives had perished.

Meanwhile, Luckner led the commandant's boat to a remote, sheltered bay in Hauraki Bay. The bay was very vast and difficult to navigate without a compass. Only at night was it possible to more or less determine by the light of the searchlights that fumbled across the surface of the bay from the Auckland forts. By morning the fugitives had crossed into the well-sheltered bay of Red Mercury Island, and anchored there, having stood all day to cool off the hunting ardor of their pursuers. A steamer passed close by the island, but did not notice anything. After spending two days in the bay, Luckner again took the boat out to sea, hoping to capture some sailboat there.

Before the boat had left its shelter, the military steamer Lady Roberts appeared near the islet, which landed a landing force that carefully searched the entire Red Mercury. Departing from the island, the steamer hit the ground with screws and was forced to return to Auckland.

Luckner, having found nothing in the sea, returned back to the bay, rightly believing that they would no longer search it.

On the third day after escaping from the commandant's boat, two schooners were noticed in the sea. Luckner decided to capture both. But, when the brave adventurer approached the sailboats, a fresh wind rose, and one schooner managed to escape. This had later fatal consequences. Coming at full speed to the side of the second schooner, Luckner and his cadets boarded the ship. With the German flag and weapons - real and fake - in their hands, the fugitives boarded the schooner shouting:

- The ship has been captured by a ship of the German fleet!

The crew of the schooner was paralyzed by surprise and horror.

All the captain could say as Luckner, armed with a makeshift cleaver, climbed onto the bridge, was a request not to kill them. Luckner quickly reassured him, promising not to touch anyone if the schooner's crew were quiet and did not try to resist.

There was a Russian cook on the schooner. He ran out on deck shouting:

- I am Russian-Russian, peace with Germany!

Having reloaded his belongings on a captured schooner and taking the commandant's "Pearl" in tow, Luckner took command of his next prey. The schooner, whose name was "Moa", turned out to be an excellent vessel, but very flat-bottomed, with a draft of less than a meter and with a large windage.



Luckner led his prize to the Kermadec Islands, intending to use there the provisions prepared for the shipwrecked. The fresh wind that had been blowing all day turned into a storm by nightfall. The captain of the captured schooner was in great alarm. His ship did not have a keel and was not adapted to be on the high seas during a storm. But Luckner and his men were in much greater danger ashore than they were at sea, and he ordered the captive captain to keep on course.

The captain stayed on the bridge all night. From time to time the sailors poured oil into the sea to weaken the force of the waves. Meanwhile, the storm was raging, the waves crashing against the stern, the ship was thrown up and down. I had to remove another part of the sails and throw overboard a load of timber, lashed on the upper deck. The "pearl" of the commandant was torn off the tugboat and smashed by the waves. In addition, it turned out that there were practically no supplies of water and food on the Moa. Luckner had to share his own supplies. The storm, which raged for thirty-six hours, greatly disrupted the corsair's plans.

On December 21, Curtis Island appeared in the distance. Large columns of smoke rose from the island, which alarmed Luckner, but it turned out that it was not smoke, but steam emitted by boiling geysers. The island, which was a volcanic crater, was completely covered with cooled lava and had no vegetation. The warm water near the island was teeming with sharks, hundreds of which surrounded the Moa. A boat was launched, in which Lieutenant Kirchgeis, with four cadets, went to the island, accompanied by a whole procession of sharks. This terrible picture made Luckner himself shudder with fear.

On the island, sailors discovered a barn knocked down with tin, in which many boxes of food and bottles of fresh water were stored. Part of these stocks was reloaded into a boat and sent to the schooner. The heavily loaded boat rowed to the schooner for a whole hour, eventually got a leak and, in a semi-sunk condition, approached the side of the Moa. Schools of sharks surrounded her, eagerly awaiting prey.

The delivered boxes contained a lot of meat, butter, and bacon. Others contained blankets, clothing, boots, medical supplies, and even an entire spare sail. Luckner planned to land the crew of the captured schooner on this island, but, given the strong sulfuric fumes on Curtis, he changed his mind and decided to land the prisoners on the next Macleay Island.

While Luckner was discussing these matters with Kirchgeiss, the signalmen discovered that smoke appeared to the north, beyond Macleay Island. Luckner immediately ordered to weigh anchor, raise all sails, and the schooner began to leave in a westerly direction. Soon a steamer appeared on the horizon, in which Luckner identified the cable-laying Iris, used by the New Zealanders as an auxiliary cruiser. Approaching, the Iris raised the English flag and some kind of signal, which Luckner was unable to read, since he did not have a vault.

The schooner continued to leave at ten knots. There was a sudden flash of light on the ship, a piercing whistle, and the shell fell into the water at the very side of the schooner.

Luckner appreciated the hopelessness of his position in the fight against an enemy with guns. He was not a suicide. With a sigh, looking for the last time at the German naval flag raised on the mast of the schooner, Luckner ordered it to be lowered and the white flag raised.

On the ship, the desperate corsair was met by some escorts in civilian clothes, holding rifles with fixed bayonets. Despite the fact that Luckner was in uniform, he was subjected to a humiliating search. He didn't even protest, knowing that it was a futile exercise. The steamboat brought the fugitives back to Auckland. On the mast of the Moa, an English flag was hoisted over the German flag. All local newspapers enthusiastically wrote about the "naval victory in the battle of the Kermadec Islands". The New Zealanders were overjoyed that they had won their own naval victory.

In Auckland, all the fugitives were taken to the Mount Eden city prison, where they were seated in separate cells. There they sat for about three weeks, and then were sent to various camps. Luckner and Kirchgeiss were placed in Fort Gervais on the island of the Riviera near Littleton. It was the most remote place in New Zealand. A fence, barbed wire and watchtowers separated the prisoners from the fortress courtyard and the rest of the world. From the window of his cell, Luckner saw the sea and ships passing by the island, which created additional torment for him. The soul of a desperate pirate passionately stretched into the sea from the four walls of a cramped prison cell.

After serving four months in solitary confinement, Luckner and Kirchgeiss were returned to their old camp on Motuihi Island, from where they had escaped. There was already a new commandant, who was forbidden to have a cutter or a motor boat. The steamer Lady Roberts now came to the island twice a week, armed with a cannon and manned by a military team to thwart any attempt to capture it. The internal order of the prisoner-of-war camp was tightened, rows of barbed wire were stretched around the barracks, searchlights were placed on the towers. Lieutenant Commander Felix Luckner had to stay here until the end of the First World War. ...

The main crew of the Seeadler, left by Luckner on the island of Mopelia under the command of Lieutenant Kling, also did not sit idle.

Having learned from the interception of radio messages that Luckner had been captured, the sailors became worried that their whereabouts would become known to the enemy, and decided to leave the island. Everyone energetically set about building the boat. But they would hardly have been able to build a ship on which fifty-eight people could go to the open sea. Once, a French sailing ship appeared in the waters of the island, the captain of which, seeing the remains of the Seeadler on the reef, rightly decided that there were shipwrecked sailors on the island.

Seeing a sailboat approaching, the Kaiser's corsairs immediately made a plan to capture it. A boat with four rowers was quickly sent to the sailboat, and six sailors armed to the teeth, dressed in uniform, hid under the banks of the boat.

The captain of the sailboat, seeing the approaching boat, raised the French flag, demonstrating to the shipwrecked that a friendly ship had arrived. The captain even shouted at the boat so that the rowers would not be exhausted - he himself would come to them.

The shipwrecked even had a parade ladder lowered from the sailboat, along which six armed German sailors ran on board, pointing rifles and pistols at their saviors. There was a general cry of horror: "Germans!"

Assuming the presence of armed German sailors in these latitudes was like "planning an ostrich hunt in the icy mountains of Alaska."

"Yes, Captain," Lieutenant Kling sighed. We are Germans and there is nothing you can do about it. We have been waiting for you for a long time. On the island are our comrades and twenty-seven American prisoners.

The captain was in despair. He decided to save the landing of the Boches that landed on the French island, and now he must pay for his kindness with the vessel entrusted to him.

The French were landed on the island, the French sailing ship, which was called the Lutetia, was renamed the Fortune, and Lieutenant Kling, who took command, ordered to raise the sails. It turned out that it was formerly a German ship, captured by the French during the war. Now it was used to deliver various cargoes to the islands of French Polynesia. There was a lot of clothing, consumer goods and food in the holds of the sailboat.

On September 5, 1917, Fortune left the island and went into the ocean.

On October 4th the Fortune anchored off the Oyster Islands. It was necessary to make minor repairs and take drinking water. When shooting from anchor, the ship ran into an underwater rock, not marked on the map, and received damage that made it completely unusable. The representative of the British government and the natives gave the German sailors the most cordial welcome. They stayed on the island for four months.

In early 1918, a Chilean ship came to the island, which took on board the Seeadler's crew and delivered them to Chile, where they were interned until the end of the war.

## EPILOGUE

After the armistice was signed in November 1918, Luckner was kept in captivity for another four months, and the former Seeadler commander returned to Germany only in July 1919. Luckner, about whom numerous legends had already circulated in his homeland, was greeted as a national hero. During his nine-month raid from December 1916 to August 1917, Luckner captured and destroyed sixteen enemy ships (three steamships and thirteen sailboats) with a total displacement of 30,099 tons. Luckner is rightfully considered the last corsair to enter the age of armor and steam in a combat raid under sail, which gave the whole story of his action in the ocean increased romance.

For some time, Luckner served in the fleet of the Weimar Republic, commanding the Niobe sailing tender, and on May 31, 1922, he retired with the rank of captain of the third rank.

But the soul of the old corsair continued to rush into the sea. After retiring, Luckner acquired the large four-masted schooner Vaterland, on which he plowed the oceans until 1935. According to rumors, Luckner also visited the island of Mopelia, where he allegedly buried countless treasures obtained on captured ships.

In 1935, the schooner "Vaterland" burned down. However, Luckner, accustomed to the blows of fate, did not lose heart. He again bought a small two-masted schooner and continued to sail on it until the outbreak of World War II. In August 1939, when by order of Hitler the naval officers-veterans of the First World War were promoted to the next rank, Luckner was not among them. It is said that he was at sea, returning to Hamburg after the outbreak of hostilities through the ring of the English blockade.

During the war years, the old sailor lived in the vicinity of Erfurt. In the spring of 1945, American troops approached the city, and General Allen, who commanded them, presented the head of the local garrison, a fanatical SS colonel, with an ultimatum to surrender, threatening otherwise to wipe the city from the face of the earth with air strikes. The fanatical colonel replied that he was going to fight to the last soldier and cartridge. Then, at the headquarters of the defense of the city, leaning on a heavy cane, the old pirate Luckner appeared. Poking the colonel in the stomach with his cane, Luckner ordered: "Surrender!" Thus, senseless bloodshed was avoided.

Felix Luckner died on April 13, 1966 at the age of eighty-five.

But until now, treasure hunters from all over the world come to the island of Mopelia, hoping to find the treasures that the legendary corsair Count Felix von Luckner hid there,

lieutenant commander of the Imperial German Navy.

Operational and tactical data of the Seeadler sailing ship, known by the nickname "Monkfish"

Displacement: 1571 tons

Main dimensions: 83.5 x 11.81 x 5.5 m.

Sail area: 2500 sq. m.

Secondary Engine: Four-cylinder diesel engine capable of nine knots.

Armament: Two 105 mm guns, two light machine guns.

Crew: 64 people.

The ship was built in 1878 at the R. Duncan & Co in Glasgow.